

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

#678 / OCT 16 - 22, 2008 | FREE
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VUEWEEKLY



It's a Chad Chad Chad Chad world

CHAD VANGAALLEN ON
SOFT AIRPLANE, GREY BOXES AND
WHY HE'LL NEVER 'GO COBAIN'
[MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / 31]

FRONT: DUNCAN VS JAFFER / 5 ARTS: *INFERNO SONATA* / 20 FILM: *W.* / 27

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CHAD VANGAALLEN

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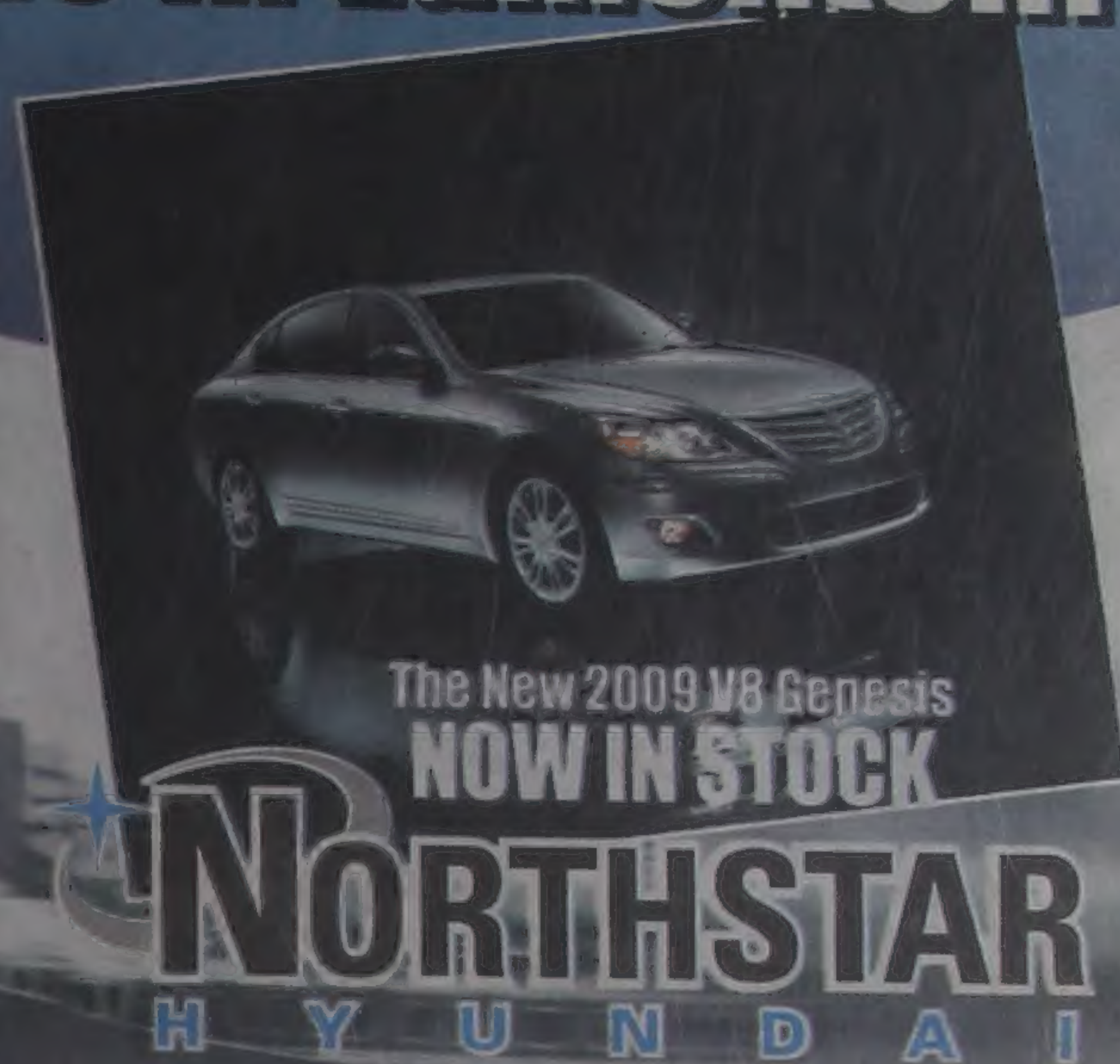
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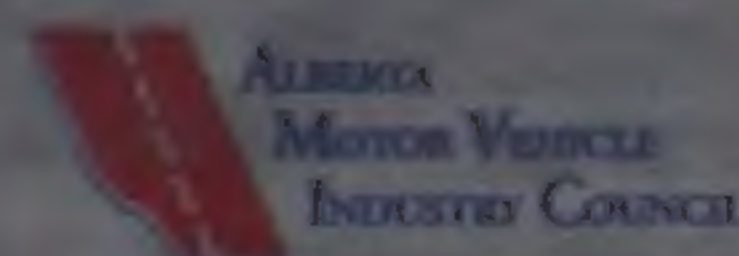
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Not feeling blue

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

It's not exactly easy to be someone whose politics lean to the left in Alberta. Often the only hope against the overwhelming Tory tide is to strategically unite around one progressive candidate, and even that kind of compromised victory is often little more than a pipe dream.

Which is exactly why Linda Duncan's victory in Edmonton-Strathcona is so heartening. It's badly needed proof that with focus, solid organization and the right candidate, there is some hope for those of us who don't see the world through Tory blue glasses. Duncan didn't need the cushion of incumbency or the promise of a waiting ministry to tip the scales in her favour, like our previous lone exception: she simply brought together or convinced enough people that she was the right choice.

What might be even more heartening is that Duncan isn't the first progressive-leaning Edmonton candidate to pull this off. The less said about provincial politics the better, but Ward 5 councillor Don Iveson followed a very similar path to success, right down to ousting a right-leaning career hack for his current spot. Now, Iveson and Duncan share significant parts of the electoral map, which should temper our optimism somewhat—Strathcona, after all, is the closest thing the provincial NDP have to a guaranteed seat. That said, both of their constituencies spread out to the edges of the city—opposite edges at that—which is some indication that progressive candidates don't always need to be in the shadow of the university to get people to listen to them.

But, while it may be the first baby steps in a walk to the left for Edmonton, it's absolutely crucial that we keep in mind how we got to even this modest point. Iveson and Duncan ran two of the sharpest campaigns our city has seen in some time, and even then their victories, particularly the latter's, were narrow. Faced with a populace that still has the Tories as their default setting, progressive candidates will continue to have to work and organize at a level far higher than their competitors. By all means we should savour the victory, but if we're ever going to add even more colour to the electoral map, we'll have to be just as smart and savvy as the people who made it happen already. ♥



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10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1L7

T: 780.426.1996 / F: 780.426.2889 / E: office@vueweekly.com / W: vueweekly.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER RON GARTH / ron@vueweekly.com
NEWS EDITOR SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com
ARTS / FILM EDITOR DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
MUSIC EDITOR EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com
DISH EDITOR DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDITOR JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vueweekly.com
ASSOCIATE MUSIC EDITOR BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER LYLE BELL / lyle@vueweekly.com
CREATIVE SERVICES MANAGER MICHAEL SIEK / mike@vueweekly.com
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT VIKKI WIERCINSKI / vikki@vueweekly.com
LAYOUT / DESIGN CHRIS BOSCHMAN / boschman@vueweekly.com

LISTINGS GLENYS SWITZER / glenys@vueweekly.com
LOCAL ADVERTISING 426.1996 / advertising@vueweekly.com
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING 426.1996 / classifieds@vueweekly.com
NATIONAL ADVERTISING DPS MEDIA / 416.413.9291
SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER ROB LIGHTFOOT / rob@vueweekly.com
ADMINISTRATION / DISTRIBUTION MIKE GARTH / michael@vueweekly.com
ADMINISTRATION / PROMOTIONS AARON GETZ / aaron@vueweekly.com
WEB / MULTIMEDIA MANAGER TREVOR KJORLIEN / trevor@vueweekly.com
COVER PHOTO MARC RIMMER

CONTRIBUTORS Malcolm Azania, Paul Blinov, Josef Braun, Rob Brezney, Jonathan Busch, Phil Duperron, Gwynne Dyer, Amy Fang, Brian Gibson, James Grastal, Sarah Hamilton, Sharman Huetnik, Josh Holmady, Jan Hostyn, Whitney Houston, Connie Howard, Ted Kerr, Maria Kotovych, Andrea Nemerson, Carolyn Nikodym, Stephen Netley, Mary Christa O'Keefe, TB Player, Steven Sander, Bryan Saunders, Sharon Yeo, David Young, Darren Zenko

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MAIL LETTERS

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

In the last election, more than 7.5 million voters cast their votes for candidates who did not get elected, and ended up "represented" by people they voted against ("Making votes count," Oct 9 - Oct 15, 2008). Most MPs "represent" mostly people who voted against them! Fair Vote Canada is holding a contest at OrphanVoters.ca to guess how many votes will be wasted this time.

WAYNE SMITH

SAD ABOUT SAG-D

I'm confused by the response from Mr Lowery ("Clearing the water on Long Lake," Letters, Oct 9 - Oct 15, 2008) to my column criticizing the Opti-Nexen Long Lake project.

My column clearly states that the Nexen Long Lake plant is not a "surface mining project." That is the entire basis of the article. But to state that "the project itself does not have a large impact on the surface of the land compared to a surface mining project" is to hope that people cannot see with their own eyes. Based on recent fly-overs of the area (the Long Lake North plant has massive security gates that make it impossible to



see up close on the ground), the Long Lake plant covers an absolutely breathtaking level of ground compared with any other Sag-D operation. When photos like the one I include are shown to people of the plant, they often remark "That looks like one of the mining plants"—something the other Sag-D plants simply do not, despite their having a much greater ecological imprint than a conventional oil pump jack or similar.

His argument that were it not for using "asphaltenes" to power the plant that either coal or natural gas would be "required" is simply bizarre. The reasons more and more people are opposed to operations like this often begin with concerns about climate change. The Alberta power grid is indeed stretched to the maximum, but to produce power with the waste byproducts of a massive plant like this cannot possibly be justified given that we are talking about a plant that will produce in the neighbourhood of six or more times the greenhouse gas emissions of a regular conventional crude pump producing the same number of barrels of crude. Further, not only is the

amount of greenhouse gas emissions much higher, the amount of actual gasoline that can be produced for cars is far lower when you begin with tar sands bitumen (as opposed to "normal" crude), making for very little in the way of gains.

Given the horrible environmental costs of mining and burning coal, the theft of heating power for people's homes of using the cleanest-burning fossil fuel (natural gas), or the threat to the atmosphere of "cogeneration" waste burning, there is an option not mentioned that needs to be considered: whether a plant like this ought to be allowed to operate at all, rather than a debate as to how to power this destructive project.

I do indeed ride my bike for work in Edmonton, but it doesn't matter even if I didn't—thanks to politicians in Edmonton, Ottawa and Washington any "oil" extracted from the tar sands is almost certainly being exported directly to the United States and is not used to power any local vehicles anyhow—so such comments merit only a saddened snicker, rather than an actual reply.

MACDONALD STAINSBY

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

Dewey defeats Truman

The story of two 'victory' parties as premature call of Jaffer win gives way to Duncan victory

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

Up until about 10 pm, the Rose & Crown pub in downtown Edmonton was a subdued affair. This was, after all, an NDP election party in conservative Alberta.

When television coverage of the vote started at 7:30 pm, members of the media outnumbered the handful of NDP supporters scattered at tables watching the screens as Elizabeth May gave her concession speech.

A half-hearted hoot went up from a corner of the bar as early returns from one poll in Edmonton showed perennial NDP candidate Hana Razga leading in Edmonton-Leduc. Minutes later, she had dropped to third, and spirits seemed to follow.

As polls on the West Coast closed and viewers in BC joined the coverage at 8 pm, they were met with Peter Mansbridge calling the election for the Conservatives. As volunteers duct-taped "Jack Layton and the Alberta team" signs to the wall behind the small stage, discussion turned to worried pondering about whether the Conservatives would be able to eke out a majority.

The first results from the much-anticipated race in Edmonton-Strathcona appeared; it was 71 votes apiece for NDP candidate Linda Duncan and Conservative Rahim Jaffer, who had held the seat since 1997. Just as predicted, the early results suggested it was going to be a close race and, with tens of thousands of votes to be counted in what was expected to be a nail-biter, likely a long night.

While expectations were high throughout the election that Duncan just might be able to steal the seat from Jaffer, NDP supporters at the Rose & Crown—perhaps stung by years of dashed hopes—were tentative. As I circulated the room soliciting predictions from the sparse but growing crowd, the opinions offered were almost all the same: Duncan would come agonizingly close—perhaps within a few hundred votes—but Jaffer would, in the end, hold the seat.



WINNER **DUNCAN**

After the CBC called the race in Edmonton-East for incumbent Conservative Peter Goldring, defeated NDP candidate Ray Martin took to the stage to address the crowd with a silver-lining message: support for the NDP was up from the 2006 contest and the party had gained a handful of seats in the East. Still, Martin admitted to the crowd, he was growing tired of being able to claim only symbolic victories on election nights.

As NDP supporters continued to slowly fill up the bar, the news from Alberta continued to be all blue. The Conservatives, as expected, were

once again sweeping the province, racking up victories with huge margins. The race in Edmonton-Strathcona was close, but Jaffer was leading Duncan, with Liberal Claudette Roy a distant third.

AT 9:05, with Jaffer ahead by a little over 1000 votes, the CBC predicted that Jaffer would hold onto his seat. Groans went up from the tables nearby. The energy and anticipation in the room went flat. Not only had Duncan lost, but her defeat had come much earlier in the evening than most people had anticipated.

I received a call from Bryan Birtles, who was across town at the Ranch covering the Rahim Jaffer

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BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

Boring. That's what most people at the Rahim Jaffer election-watching party agreed the night was, right up until about 10 pm. Most of the members of the media throng that had camped out in a corner of the Ranch to watch the results pour in on the big screen TVs and get the reactions of Jaffer and his supporters were more interested in the battle brewing in Sherwood Park between Tim Uppal and James Ford. A battle which, as the polls began to be tallied, veered wildly between the two candidates, neither taking a lead of more than 50 votes.

As Jaffer himself arrived at the bar at around 9:15, he was surrounded by a large scrum of microphones and cameras, patiently answering questions in

LOSER **JAFFER**

good spirits. Some of the questions were, in fact, about the Uppal/Ford race, instead of his own. As he answered, his supporters—who had been trickling in for about a half hour—created a raucous energy, banging plastic thunder sticks and cheering his name. Afterwards, Jaffer gave what amounted to a victory speech.

"I want to take a moment to give congratulations to the candidates that ran in this riding. We all saw that they put on a strong fight, they were very good candidates and they

CONTINUES ON PAGE 13

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Schooling the small fish

Small businesses unite! You have nothing to lose but the chains!

MALCOLM AZANIA / malcolm@vancouverweekly.com

Big fish are obviously proficient at swallowing small fish, but according to Michael Shuman, if enough small fish get "schooled" in the same direction, they might be enough to run the mega-eaters right past the reef.

Shuman, economist, attorney and entrepreneur, is author of *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in the Global Age* and *The Small Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses are Beating the Global Competition* and he's coming to Edmonton to preach the small-and-local gospel as part of this year's North of Nowhere Expo (see prevue on page 13).

"There is a growing body of evidence that local businesses are far superior for economic development [than] non-local businesses," Shuman explains over the phone from his Washington DC office. "That information is still not well-appreciated by policy-makers and economic developers."

On the surface, Shuman's argument seems backward. Conventional wisdom says business efficiency increases when you centralize decision-making and operations, thus increasing economies of scale and reducing duplication. Succeed enough in those areas and you can dominate the market and maximize profits by undercutting competitors with low prices on reliably delivered products and services. Everyone wins except the inefficient companies, right? So with that logic, shouldn't citizens prefer 20 McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy franchises to 20 local burger joints owned by 20 different families?

"There's probably a dozen differences between the two," says Shuman immediately to the contrast. "Let's start with one enormous difference: in a franchise model, usually the ingredients for the franchise, the supplies, are purchased from outside the community, whereas in a locally owned model, a far greater percentage of goods and services that go into the business are purchased locally."

"More of those local purchases generate what's called the economic multiplier, [which] is the cornerstone for income, wealth and jobs," he continues. "We have a dozen studies in the United States that compare local and non-local businesses that on the surface are delivering the



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exact same good or service, and what we find is that the economic multiplier from the local business is two-to-four times higher. That's two-to-four times the jobs, the income and the wealth-effects, the tax benefit. So we're not talking about small potatoes of difference."

Because chains buy from head office or from other allied chains and major wholesalers, they transfer local consumer dollars to distant locations, so their advertising designs, their printing, their legal services, their accounting and, of course, their goods, all generate non-local paydays. But because convenience compels local businesses to contract locally, local money keeps circulating locally.

"We have evidence that local businesses are better for tourism, smart growth, social equality, political participation and carbon footprint," Shuman says.

SIMPLY BUYING LOCAL isn't enough, however. Shuman clarifies the difference between "dumb ways" and "smart ways of doing localization." The inferior method, he says, doesn't address bad prices, whereas the superior method is strongly price-conscious.

"An example of how that can lead

to a lot more wealth," Shuman explains, "is in getting a mortgage. Even before the current crisis, there have been years of evidence that local banks and credit unions have better rates than global banks do. So just that one act of a homeowner moving the mortgage to a local financial institution can save thousands of dollars a year in mortgage payments. Health-care that focuses more on prevention than treatment puts more dollars into a community locally and reduces the cost of the health care."

Although progressives and political leftists might have difficulty conceiving of business as a path to social justice, Shuman urges a reconsideration.

"Generating wealth is an obvious antidote to poverty," he says, arguing that such skepticism about small business is changing, albeit slowly. Shuman explains that corporate globalization has radicalized many small business owners, who now understand the threat to their position posed by megabusiness.

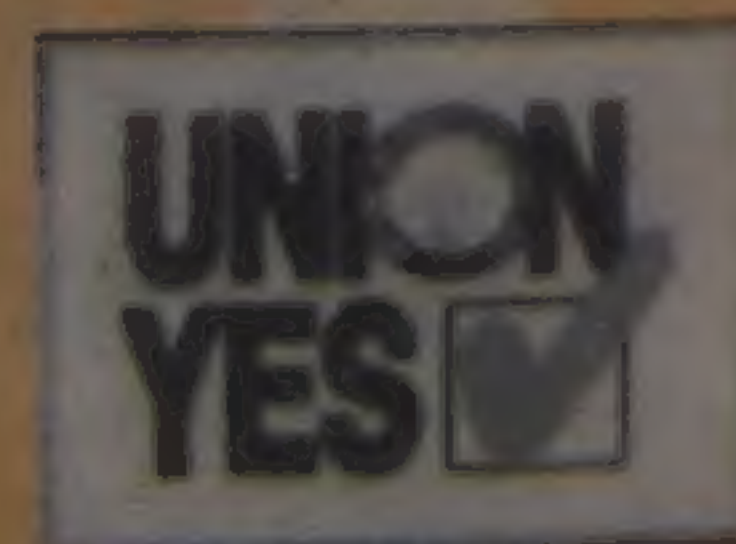
Shuman praises the advocacy efforts by the Canadian Union of Public Employees to encourage government/union support for the expansion of small business in BC's devastated forest communities, because government unions depend on a well-funded government, and the tax base can grow there only if small business succeeds. Anyone who wants union leadership for social progress, says Shuman, needs to support small-mart development, although "that kind of sophistication is not present in the United States' union movement yet, but I think we're going to get there."

While concepts such as Shuman's are sometimes dismissed by critics as elitist compared to the low prices and alleged convenience of Wal-Mart which benefit the poor, Shuman argues otherwise.

"One of the biggest problems of poor communities is not the absence of assets. It's the fact that they have very poor economic multipliers. Dollars are spent instantly in non-locally owned corner stores, bodegas or gas stations and the dollars fly out of the community. So building a lot more linked local businesses in poor neighbourhoods is the best guarantee to start building wealth back into the community and pull it out of its spiraling poverty." ▽

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Think I'll pay up to Alberta

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vancouverweekly.com

I am being stalked by the Alberta government. As my girlfriend and I drove across the country, moving from Alberta to the East Coast, Alberta Health and Wellness followed, looming behind, an object always far closer than it appeared in the side-view mirror. We've whispered to each other about somehow getting into a Former-Albertan Protection Program, but we're worried that some big, burly guys in Stelmach Surveillance vans will still track us down somehow.

Five years earlier, after moving to Alberta from free-healthcare Ontario to pursue graduate studies at the U of A, I discovered that I had to pay healthcare premiums once my salary reached the lofty peak of \$20 000 per year. But all around us in Edmonton, student-aged people vroomed past in trucks, big rigs, even Humvees, skipping post-secondary education to make big money in Fort McMurray and other drilling or refining grounds. Three new massive complexes were added to the University of Alberta Hospital megaplex that dwarfed most of the quaint old buildings on the campus next door. Alberta was drowning in petroleum-slicked wealth; I can oil-well remember the cheque for 400 "Ralph bucks" every Albertan got in January 2006 thanks to the premier's

COMMENT

HEALTHCARE PREMIUMS

magnanimous sharing of the millions being piped out of the province's tar-sands.

Except, while the province gushed out a record \$8.55 billion budget surplus in 2005 - 06 (and \$8.9 billion in 2006 - 07 and \$4.6 billion in 2007 - 08 ...), \$400 didn't even cover a year's worth of healthcare premiums for us. We were paying \$88 a month in case we got sicker than the common cold and had to show up at the doctor's office. And that's when a non-fever-related chill struck me. I realized that this province, Tory-run for more than 35 years, eschewing most anything that smacked of socialism or a safety net, was perfectly happy to be one of the few provinces (along with BC and Ontario, which reinstituted premiums in 2004 after 15 years without them) that charged its citizens for a basic Canadian right. A right that Saskatchewan neighbour Tommy Douglas had helped ensure was free and accessible for all Canadians, a right most of us proudly hold up as one of the few obvious, enshrined differences between us and Americans.

SO WHEN I CALLED UP Alberta Health and Wellness to tell them to cancel my account, why should I have been surprised when they told me that I couldn't just opt out that quickly? They had a responsibility to cover me for three months after I left the province. And, yes, they'd be sending me a bill to that effect.

I got it a few days ago. The balance due for four months of premiums, up to and including a small penalty for late payment on the previous bill (what did the *Bible* say about usury again?) and the month of September, the second month that my girlfriend and I had never lived in Alberta, worked out to \$363.88, almost a dollar a day for the year. Oh, but wait! A little yellow pamphlet was included which noted that "Alberta is eliminating healthcare premiums as of January 2009." And then beneath, a cheery threat tucked in among the pamphlet's point-form caveats, "Alberta Health and Wellness will continue to pursue collections from those who fail to pay premiums." Alberta may be Canada's only rat-free province, but I would still have to pay the piper.

So why am I writing this, you ask, if premiums are being phased out? Well, it's not just years of pent-up outrage at having to pay them as a struggling student and underpaid teacher while

working for a public institution in a super-privatized, oil-rich province that acts uncomfortable with socialized medicine while happily profiting from it. Or my confusion and indignation—I call it "condignation"—that one of the bullet points on the Alberta Budget webpage trumpets that the new budget "includes \$1 billion in savings to Albertans and Alberta businesses with the elimination of healthcare premiums." Or a lament that, with Don Copeman having opened up another private clinic, this time in Calgary, I wish privatized healthcare and healthcare premiums had become an urgent topic of debate in the elections. Or an exhortation to Albertans that, with the economic crisis bound to hit even the oil patch and construction boom hard, they have to start figuring out, right now, what vital social programs need to be safeguarded from provincial cutbacks, interference or add-on fees.

And yes, I will be celebrating on January 1, 2009 by purposely getting sick in the healthcare premium-free province that I now live in (I'm planning on contracting a fairly low-level flu or maybe a minor throat infection). But the main reason I'm writing this is that, believe it or not, newspapers still pay a little bit of money for columns. And I need money—I'm trying to pay off a bill for \$363.88. ▽

TOP 10 RINGTONES



- 1) Womanizer
Britney Spears
- 2) Whatever You Like
T.I.
- 3) So What
Pink
- 4) A Milli
Lil Wayne
- 5) Just Dance feat. Colby O'Donis
Lady GaGa
- 6) Disturbia
Rihanna
- 7) Let It Rock
Kevin Rudolf and Lil Wayne
- 8) Another Way to Die
Jack White & Alicia Keys
- 9) Hot N Cold
Katy Perry
- 10) Never Again
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DUNCAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

party. Jaffer, he said, had just taken to the stage and offered his cheering supporters what amounted to a victory speech, thanking his opponents for their hard-fought campaigns.

I made my way through the now-dejected crowd and pulled aside NDP organizer Jeff Sloychuk for his reaction. Despite the CBC giving Jaffer the victory, Sloychuk said he thought it was still too early to make the call either way, especially given the uneven support for the candidates across the riding. It all depended on which polls were still to come.

As the evening wore on, Jaffer's lead continued to dwindle—800, 600—but the CBC kept Edmonton-Strathcona in the Conservative win column. At 9:54, Alberta NDP Leader Brian Mason took to the stage and delivered another chin-up message: the NDP had made a strong showing and was the second-place party in the province.

At 10:09, a cheer and chants of "NDP! NDP!" rose up from a corner of the bar where the television was tuned to CTV coverage. The network, which was showing more polls than the CBC, for the first time showed Duncan in the lead. The crowd went crazy.

My phone rang again. Back at the Ranch, Jaffer had just addressed his supporters again, telling them that things were closer than originally thought and recanting his premature victory speech.

The Rose & Crown was buzzing. Sloychuk moved through the crowd, his voice booming through the loudspeakers, "Can you say Raj Pannu in

1997?" referencing the provincial win in Strathcona for the NDP. With the anticipation growing in the crowd as CTV put Duncan's lead at 400 over Jaffer, dozens of beaming people began arriving from Duncan's campaign office across the river. I bumped into smiling former NDP MLA David Eggen, who told me that Duncan had already won and was on her way over from her campaign office to join the celebration.

AS NEWS of the Duncan win spread through the now wall-to-wall crowd, the Rose & Crown went absolutely bonkers. Ecstatic supporters were pouring into the bar, hugging each other, waving Duncan signs and chanting, "Linda! Linda!"

As Duncan arrived, surrounded by cameras, and waded through the crowd to the stage, the cheers were deafening. When Brian Mason took to the mic and introduced Duncan to the crowd by bellowing, "I give you the member of Parliament for Edmonton-Strathcona!" it somehow got even louder.

"I'll tell ya, it was a community effort and we've taken back Edmonton-Strathcona," Duncan told the crowd to ecstatic cheers. "This is not just a victory for Edmonton-Strathcona. I am absolutely thrilled that the NDP has taken Alberta. We're second in almost every riding."

"What can I say? I promise to bring the federal government to Alberta, starting today," Duncan continued. "I'm absolutely exhausted. This just shows that we need to wait until every last vote comes in!"

As Duncan was thronged by reporters as she left the stage, the party stepped into high gear. All of a sudden, it seemed like every progres-

sive in Edmonton was at the Rose & Crown. Duncan supporters danced with a group of Mexican soccer fans in town for the Mexico-Canada World Cup qualifier. Overwhelmed bartenders raced to keep up with drink orders. Rachel Notley, Duncan's provincial NDP counterpart in Strathcona, wandered through the crowd, beaming with an ear-to-ear smile.

Nokomis owner Elizabeth Hudson summed up her feelings scatalogically: "He did say he was going to shit his pants if she won," Hudson said, gesturing across the table to her husband, artist Raymond Biesenger. "It feels especially good, because we were both consciously pessimistic about what was going to happen tonight. I think we were willing things to go badly so that we knew things were going to go well."

As the clock ticked past midnight with no end in sight to the party, it was hard not to feel happy for the delighted NDP supporters, relishing a rare victory in a province where wins for the left are few and far between. Rare though NDP triumphs may be, Duncan told reporters that her win shows that the political views of Albertans are more diverse than most people think.

"You know, I don't feel like a voice in the wilderness. I've been working on these issues for more than 35 years in Alberta. I know how people felt. It was just a question of time until somebody actually broke through and actually represents the way people feel in this province. So I don't feel like a voice in the wilderness at all. I feel like I'm representing a heck of a lot of people that are out there in the cities and rural Alberta that I work with everyday." ▽

JAFFER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

all ran very strong campaigns. They had me on my toes, there's no doubt about it," Jaffer said to some subdued applause. "Tonight is a night where we're going to celebrate."

By 9:50, with 85 per cent of polls reporting in Edmonton-Strathcona, the numbers had NDP candidate Linda Duncan—one of the candidates who had kept him on his toes the whole campaign—only one per cent back of Jaffer. A slight groan went through those parts of the crowd paying attention to the televisions scattered throughout the bar.

It was at that moment I realized I was going to be at this "victory" party all night.

By 10:05, Jaffer had taken to the stage again, rescinding his victory speech.

"We may have been a little early on the celebration; it's a lot closer than we thought," he admitted. "We're not going to say that we won yet, we maybe should have held off a little bit. We're going to wait until all the polls are closed, which should be in the not-too-distant future. Keep the faith, we'll see what happens, but let's keep this party going!"

THOUGH A SIGNIFICANT number of people had left following the original victory speech, a jubilant cheer still arose from the crowd that remained. Jaffer and his supporters were still optimistic—they had been in tight races before, they reminded each other. He only needed to win by one vote they told one another.

At 10:24 a rumour went through the gathered media people that Duncan had pulled ahead of Jaffer and was about to be declared the winner. Jaffer himself was nowhere to be seen, sequestered in a back room of the Ranch meeting with his advisors. At 10:30 I received a call from Scott Harris, who was covering Duncan's election party. The NDP was about to confirm victory in the riding.

The room was still bustling, eager supporters lining up at the bar and clinking glasses with each other. Thundersticks rolled around on tables sprinkled with campaign literature and blue glitter. Balloons floated throughout the room.

At 10:36, CTV announced that Jaffer had lost the riding of Edmonton-Strathcona by 300 votes. Silence.

Jaffer was nowhere to be seen. It took over an hour for him to emerge to speak to reporters. A member of his team informed the gathered media—a gathering which seemed to

have increased—that he would answer no questions. Jaffer would merely give a statement to the media, and that would be it.

"There's still a little bit of time left to see what will happen—it's too close to call. We're not claiming victory, we're not claiming defeat, but we know—as everyone knew—that this was going to be a close call," he said, referencing a group of "special" ballots that had yet to be counted. "The special ballots are people like military families, people with disabilities, so when you're down to a margin like this it could make a big difference. Who knows, I might be landslide Rahim at the end of the night. Don't give up hope yet."

A cheer went up amongst the remaining supporters and volunteers. Jaffer promised that he would be out later with the results and would answer questions then.

Just after midnight, MLA Thomas Lukaszuk came out of the Ranch's backroom to inform reporters that the special ballots hadn't been fully counted, and that even if they had been, a full recount would need to be taken due to the close nature of the results. Because Jaffer wanted to wait for the full results before addressing the media, Lukaszuk said, it was unlikely he would be available for any more questions. ▽

Chocolate meltdown

The dangers of Kisses show Alberta is headed the wrong way on nuclear

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com



"How many of you eat Hershey's chocolate?" Helen Caldicott asked those of us at the Myer Horowitz to hear her speak on nuclear power. She doesn't, she says, because the 1979 partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant contaminated the countryside around the nearby Hershey chocolate factory, the cows grazing there, their milk and ultimately the chocolate.

That was a long time ago, though, and

Hershey's said the incident released only trace amounts of iodine 131 (which remains radioactive for just over five months), and noble

gases, which don't accumulate in living tissue and enter the food chain. But FDA milk analyses showed significantly elevated levels of iodine 131 and cesium 137, and cesium 137 is radioactive for 600 years. It is a potassium analogue and deposits in human muscles cells.

Radiation experts say if iodine 131 and cesium 137 contamination was measurable, other radioactive elements would

have been also. And a notarized statement made by someone particularly close to the situation, Jane Rickover, suggests Admiral Rickover convinced President Jimmy Carter to cover up the data of the accident at Three Mile Island.

"In May, 1983, my father-in-law, Admiral Hyman G Rickover, told me that at the time of the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor accident, a full report was commissioned by President Jimmy Carter. [Admiral Rickover] said that the report, if published in its entirety, would have destroyed the civilian nuclear power industry because the accident at Three Mile Island was infinitely more dangerous than was ever made public. He told me that he had used his enormous personal influence with President Carter to persuade him to publish the report only in a highly 'diluted' form. The President himself had originally wished the full report to be made public. In November, 1985, my father-in-law told me that he had come to deeply regret his action in persuading President Carter to suppress the most alarming aspects of that report."

In February of 1985, \$3.9 million was paid out by Three Mile Island's insurance company to those dealing with disease believed to be related to the incident—in exchange for an agreement not to discuss the settlements.

NOW, ALMOST THREE DECADES later, while much of Europe is actively moving away from nuclear power, Alberta is actively moving towards it, many of us buying the "clean and green" message being put out by the industry and our politicians. But children under five living within five kilometres of a nuclear power facility are more than twice as likely to develop cancer as those living further away, and they show a 117 per cent increase in leukemia according to the *International Journal of Cancer* and the *European Journal of Cancer*.

Our energy minister, Mel Knight, has publicly said he's committed to getting "reliable and clear information on all of the available energy options." So I challenge him to read books by Caldicott, to look at all the science which provides evidence of

harm, instead of at industry-fueled spin—and then to look at the alternatives of geothermal power, of harnessing our infamous Rocky Mountain winds, of investing in solar panels for home owners.

He's got some amends to make with Albertans anyway, after his defending the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board for using taxpayer dollars to hire private investigators to spy on central Alberta landowners.

And the rest of us have to begin taking our responsibilities as members of a democracy seriously. We've got to start making sure our civil servants are more than persuasive or shrewd businessmen; we've got to make sure they know their way around medical and science journals. We've got to stop living like there's no tomorrow, or there may be no tomorrow.

I haven't eaten Hershey's chocolate for years, for ethical and other reasons; now I have one more. Two actually—most Hershey's chocolate isn't even real chocolate anymore. They've recently removed cocoa butter from many of their products in favour of less expensive and less healthy vegetable oil. ▽

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Kim Jong-Il'in' or Kim Jong-chillin'?

North Korea still running circles around Washington despite uncertainty about the Dear Leader's health

COMMENT
DYER STRAIGHT
GWYNNE DYER
gwyndyer@vancouverweekly.com

Korea is not a tropical country. In the autumn, the leaves turn yellow and red, and by October the process is pretty far along, especially in North Korea. Which is why there are grave doubts that Kim Jong-Il is in good health, as Pyongyang pretends, and indeed some question whether he is alive at all. And despite the agreement by Washington to take Kim's neo-Stalinist regime off its list of terrorism sponsors, which persuaded North Korea to let international inspectors back into its Yongbyon nuclear site, we still don't know where its nuclear weapons (if they exist) might be hidden.

Kim, the "Dear Leader" and absolute ruler of North Korea since 1994, has not been seen in public since early September, when he failed to make an appearance at a military parade marking the regime's 60th anniversary. There was intense speculation in South Korea that the 66-year-old dictator had suffered a stroke and undergone surgery, although the source of this rumour was never clear.

The North Korean regime denied any-

thing was wrong (as it always does), and last Saturday it finally produced some recent footage of Kim Jong-Il inspecting a women's military unit. The only problem was that it was an outdoor location with lots of trees and bushes, and all the leaves were a lush green colour. Nowhere in Korea looks like that in mid-October; a horticultural expert at Seoul National University estimated that the event took place in July or August.

Couldn't they at least have produced some indoor footage of the Dear Leader that nobody had seen before, so that the deception was not so obvious? Probably not, since this is a regime where the dictator's activities are on the front page of the papers every day and lead the television news each evening. His every public act is documented, but the material is used immediately. They must have searched long and hard for some footage that would not already have been seen by every foreign embassy in Pyongyang. Too bad about the leaves.

This confirms that Kim Jong-Il is at least seriously ill. For all we know, he may be dead, and there may be a fierce succession struggle going on behind the scenes in Pyongyang. (The Dear Leader inherited power from his father, the "Great Leader" Kim Il-Sung, who founded the regime in 1948, but none of the cur-

rent ruler's children have been publicly groomed for the throne.) Whatever the state of palace politics in Pyongyang, however, the regime retains the ability to run circles around the Bush administration in diplomacy.

THE MOST RECENT confrontation began last month, when North Korea announced that it intended to restart nuclear activities at Yongbyon because the US had not kept its promise to remove Pyongyang from its terrorism blacklist. That was part of the six-country deal signed last November, in which North Korea agreed to end its nuclear activities in return for badly needed aid.

As part of the deal, Washington agreed to remove North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism—and a lot of the aid could not legally flow to Pyongyang until that was done. But the Bush administration, as so often before, overplayed a weak hand: it stalled on removing the terrorism label in the hope of forcing North Korea to allow American and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors free access to suspected North Korean nuclear sites.

So the North Koreans simply stopped dismantling the Yongbyon nuclear site (including the plutonium reprocessing

plant) and announced that they were re-activating it. It took the Bush administration, in legacy mode and desperate for at least one apparent foreign policy success, only a couple of weeks to yield to Pyongyang's demand. Washington removed North Korea from the terrorism list on October 11, and Pyongyang let the inspectors back in on October 12. But they can't go wherever they please.

As before, international inspectors only have access to "declared" North Korean nuclear sites. "Undeclared" sites—ones that Pyongyang forgot to mention—can only be inspected with the regime's permission, on a case-by-case basis. The whole play around the terrorism designation was an attempt by Washington to force Pyongyang to allow wider access, and it has failed miserably. Game, set and match to North Korea.

The harshest critic of this outcome is none other than John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security in the first Bush administration. Washington's climb-down last weekend left all the key questions unanswered, he complained: "Where are their weapons? Where is the rest of their plutonium? Where is their uranium enrichment program? What have they done in



terms of outward proliferation? And we got essentially nothing new on that other than a commitment to keep negotiating."

What's ironic about this is that Washington's tactics in this diplomatic fiasco are very reminiscent of the style that Bolton favoured himself when he was in office: bluster and threats, with not much ability to deliver. It didn't work for him, either.

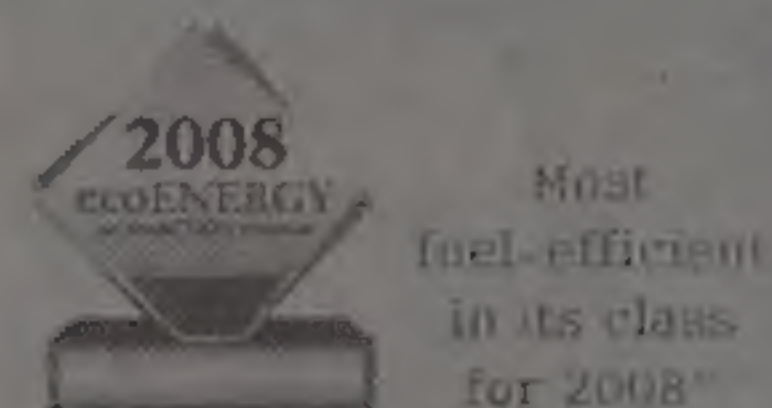
The rest of the world still doesn't know whether North Korea has usable nuclear weapons (it tested one in 2006, with unimpressive results), or how many, or where they might be hidden. Whoever is in charge in Pyongyang is playing a weak hand very, very well. ▽

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.

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It's all up to you

Henry Rollins finds hope in youth and the political centre

by VUE WEEKLY / bryan@vueweekly.com

Henry Rollins: best-known front-man of legendary punk band Black Flag, leader of the Rollins band and now a professional public speaker. Rollins has always been opinionated, and has focused on his spoken word performances since the mid-'90s, recounting his life and speaking out on subjects that matter to him. With the arrival of the second Bush administration, Rollins's performances became a vocal assault on taking on right-wing politicians and challenging the neo-cons.

in a matter of months and the presidential election to choose his successor mere weeks away, Rollins is heading out on a new speaking tour that he has called the Recountdown Tour. *Vue* talked with the man about the state of American politics and what his thoughts are on where his country is headed in the post-W era.

VUE WEEKLY: Why are you calling your show the Recountdown Tour?

HENRY ROLLINS: It's in reference to the fact that I think that in none of these elections will the outcome be trusted by many, so I think whoever loses will cry foul and demand a recount and every presidential election will be somewhat contentious in the end because of Diebold machines and how easily votes can be lost, voter caging and how some people try and make sure other people don't vote. Basically I'm counting down to the next argument.

VW: Why bring a show about American politics to Canada?

HR: It's not all that political. The show is basically the last year and what I saw. With all these tours I do I see this and I see that and I come back and I report. In America right now, as you know, there's a lot of people who are watching this thing very closely and there's a lot on the line and it's getting uglier as it grinds to a bloody close. Having done seven years and several months with George W Bush as my president, I'm not exactly going to miss him, but things will be different when he goes and I wanted one last lap around the track before he goes.

VW: Is American politics broken?

HR: Yes. For the last several years and several months you've had people working very hard to break it. That's the strategy, to break it to pieces and say, "Look the government doesn't work!" in an effort to deregulate and privatize.

VW: How are these people breaking it?

HR: Showing you that the army doesn't work so you'd better send in Blackwater showing you that FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] doesn't work so you'd better send in Blackwater showing you that any kind of publicly based reform doesn't work



PREVIEW

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so you'd better privatize. Well, the bridges don't work so they should be privately built and privately maintained. If they weren't draining every single dollar of the public wealth in Iraq, then there'd be the budget to take care of America's crumbling infrastructure.

Basically there are people telling you to shut up and wait under Caesar's mouth and the crumbs that fall from it will feed you and make sure you always have rent money and I don't think that's true.

VW: What can be done to fix American politics?

HR: You need to let government do its thing. You need to stop sabotaging it. You need to stop having glaring contempt for it. I think in the last seven years and some we've had that [sabotage] thanks to the Republicans, thanks to the neo-conservative groups, thanks to the think-tanks and the lobbyists. People like Grover Norquist, people like Jack Abramoff, who don't want government. They want government, as Mr Norquist once said, to be so small you can drown it in a bathtub.

VW: Do either of the candidates running for president right now represent the change you want to see?

HR: Yeah.

VW: Ok.

HR: You asked me a question, and I answered it.

VW: As both candidates move towards the centre in an effort to appeal to the widest base, does that disappoint you?

HR: Could it also be that maybe the centre is where the answers are?

VW: Is that what you think?

HR: Absolutely. The centre is the let's-not-go-batshit-crazy-and-get-extreme part of the spectrum. How about let's be rational and look at the common good and that we think everyone

should have three square meals and a roof that doesn't leak? So let's lose the invective and stop hurling brick bats at each other and let's sit down and talk this over. That's more the middle

VW: Even though Americans have seen that countries such as Canada can allow gay marriage and society doesn't crumble, why do you think it can't happen in America?

HR: Good question. You'd think in the land of the free and the home of the brave it'd be completely okay for Bill to marry Tom and any good conservative would realize it's none of his damn business. Maybe it's because we're so inured to the Christian model of things. We insist it's in the Constitution—really it's not. We insist that God should be our guide—I heartily disagree. Maybe it's how you get the votes from people who wouldn't always vote, you say to hell with the queers and stem cell research and Darwin was a liar and all that happy shit.

VW: Is America moving out of its position as leader of the world?

HR: America's been out of that position for quite a while. Some people are in denial about it, but when you go from the greatest creditor nation in the world to the greatest debtor nation in the world, what else could you be? We owe people a lot of money. All China has to do is call in that debt.

We're losing more and more power all the time and as you see in any closing society, they go down swinging. They just start wars as they list to the side. And that's all we're doing.

VW: Is there anything going on now that leads you to believe that there's hope for America?

HR: Yeah. There are a lot more young people than ever who are voting. A lot more young people than ever are realizing the truth about climate change and they want to be part of turning that around, pursuing renewable energy, making the world a cleaner, safer, less warlike place. I think young people are not buying into the racism and homophobia of their ancestors and I think they're headed, eventually, in the right direction ... as soon as these people have their hands torn from the wheel. ▽

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and then the party got put on hold.

After a little over a week of simply playing crafty create-and-share puzzle-platform/adventure (insert further genres and adjectives here, as needed) construction set *LittleBigPlanet*, a week of ignoring responsibilities and basic hygiene in favour of trolling through the weird worlds concocted by the thousands of player/creators lucky enough to get in on the pre-release beta, I'd finally got enough inspiration and information to dive in and start making my own little opus.

For two sunup-to-sundown days I wrangled virtual wood and sponge,

tweaked levers and pistons ... and got the Fever but good, my mind churning over *LittleBigPlanet*, my hands twitching for the controller whenever physical life tore me away. I was in touch with my inner Demiurge-pulling happy little cloud-people, owl-elevators and weird tribal gods out of nothing, slowly populating a world of adventure that began with a cup of coffee and ends with ...

... well, I guess we'll just have to wait and see for that. Last night, after briefly redeploying my PS3 as movie player, I tried to get back to work only to find the message: CONTENT EXPIRED. The beta was over, all projects on hold 'til retail release on October 21. My own primal nerd-howl of frustration joined a world-wide chorus, coyote-style.

Throat raw, I dash to Google and, in my panic, address her in plain English: "Will littlebigplanet levels made in beta carry

over to release?" A sigh, then, of relief; of course that stuff's going to stay around. Wasn't that the most of the point of the beta, to populate the content pool with wonders? And such wonders; I raved about this material last week, and the situation only got crazy-cooler before they pulled the plug—check out YouTube for highlights. Some dude deployed *LBP*'s switches and levers to build an analog computer, a functioning Difference Engine; another guy built a level to propose to his girlfriend. Of course, as is the way with human endeavours, 80 per cent of the material is kind of crap ... but, this early in the game, even the crap is instructive.

SO INSTRUCTED. I've been building my little level, learning as I go. I haven't been this hard into a toolkit since *Pinball Construction Set* in 1983, where I wasn't so much interested in creating a great table as I was reveling in my 10-year-old joy at being able to control gravity and the laws of physics for the first time, to make a few swipes with the joystick (this is pre-mouse days) and have something new

and real and my very own on-screen.

This spirit of pure play is very much supported by *LittleBigPlanet*'s tools and style. In fact, the whole thing is set up in such a way that the more childlike and playful you are in your level-building approach, the more success you'll have. *LBP*'s aesthetic is pure kindergarten diorama, and fighting against it—striving for sleekness, realism, precision—is frustrating and futile. When we were kids we'd take a refrigerator carton and that'd be a rocket ship; a pile of sofa cushions would be a castle. That's how you've got to roll in *LBP*. A piece of cardboard dangling from a spring, with a scary face drawn on it? That's a ghost. How do I know this styrofoam cube is supposed to be a jail? It's got a little sign that says "JAIL."

When it comes down to actually using the tools, the same kind of mechanism is in effect: overthinking is trouble. Once you assume everything is totally simple, it magically becomes so. My own *LittleBigPlanet* satori came when I allowed myself to truly believe that it is a 2-D game. Sure, it looks three-dimensional, but that

Z-axis is mostly ornamental; *LBP* divides depth into three lanes, and once in its lane no object ever leaves: nothing will ever pop out toward the player, nothing will ever topple into the backdrop. Feel this, and you're free.

At the time of beta expiry, I'd just begun to experiment with using my PlayStation Eye camera (dusty and neglected since my months-ago dabbling with *The Eye of Judgment*) to capture objects and textures and bring them into the game world: puppets, landscapes, the tweed pattern from my sofa. I had this whole thing planned, you know? And now ... well. I went to sleep frustrated, and dreamed *LittleBigPlanet* raising mighty fortresses of foam and felt with a gesture, riding in shoebox starships with clockwork engines, concocting the cuddliest widdle deathtwaps ever! And this morning I surfed the snooze button for two hours, keeping in that sleep/wake hypnagogic zone where all the good ideas live.

One week, children; one week and it'll all come true. ♥



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We've got a hockey season. Game one kicked off (oops, skated off?) with a splashy pre-game video show, cool retro blue and orange gear and the right result. The Oilers defeated Colorado 3-2 to win their 17th home opener since joining the NHL. (Overall record on home openers: 17-7-5). That, like the mythical pile of lawyers on the bottom of the ocean, is what they call a good start. We just slagged lawyers. They don't sue, do they?

YOU CAN'T SPELL COALESCENCE WITHOUT ALES

A healthy Oiler squad is probably one thing Oilers fans are most hoping for this season. (Well, there's that and a new/retro third jersey for Christmas. Hint.) Two seasons ago the Oilers set a team record for most man games missed to injury. Last season they broke that record with 346 injury days. Ethan Moreau, Sheldon Souray, Shawn Horcoff, Matt Greene, Jarret Stoll and Ales Hemsky all missed significant ice time over the past two seasons. The plague of injuries could very well have contributed to the team failing to make the playoffs. The injury woes weren't all bad. The holes in the Oiler lineup last season resulted in more opportunities and increased roles for young players like Sam Gagner, Andrew Coglian, Tom Gilbert and Robert Nilsson that wouldn't have otherwise surfaced. BY

YOU CAN'T SPELL PROGNOSTICATION WITHOUT GNOTIC

It may have been because of all the excitement of *Hockey Night in Canada's* Anthem Challenge, but for some reason I forgot to submit my Oiler season predictions like others did last week. So here goes:

I do believe that the Oil will compete for the Northwest Division title. Unlike a lot of folk, however, I don't think they will be com-

peting with the Flames for it. We've already seen signs of the inevitable meltdown that always comes a couple of years into Coach Mike Keenan's tenure with any team. I also believe that Vancouver will shock people by actually being able to score goals and the Nucks will be on top of the Northwest. The Avs are just plain old, and the Wild are just plain predictable (again my choice for most ironically named sports franchise).

Within the organization there will probably not be very many changes made unless the Oilers have yet another rash of freak injuries. The addition of hulk Steve MacIntyre will help in this regard, making opponents think twice about running Ales Hemsky and the kids with impunity. Watch for a spike in #33 jersey sales the day after "Smackintyre" beats the hell out of Minnie's Derek Boogard. As a team, the Oilers are still maturing, so don't expect them to steamroll through the season. They will lose to some bad teams, and they may win some they don't deserve to. (ie their season opener against the Avs). They will, however, be one of the most exciting teams to watch this year, and mostly for the right reasons. TB

YOU CAN'T SPELL JAROME IGINLA WITHOUT OILER

Early into the season, the Oilers will be tested early with a home at home series against the Flames. The Oilers have toughened up this year with the addition of AHL scrapper Steve MacIntyre (213 penalty minutes in 62 AHL games last year) and a scrappier and less huggy version of Zack Stortini. New addition Jason Strudwick added some grit too. Calgary has a lineup featuring fighters like Andre Roy (1093 career penalty minutes in 473 NHL games) and Jim Vandermeer (393 PIMs in 269 games). Iggy. Dion Phaneuf and Robyn Regehr all play with some edge to their game. The first game is Friday in Cowtown and the two teams will pack up the bandages and gauze and travel to Edmonton for a *Hockey Night in Canada* rematch. BY

THIS WEEK'S OILER DEFINITION

"Rookie": 1. A young 18-year-old (Gagner) or even 23-year-old (Gilbert) hockey player in his first NHL season 2. A relatively ancient 28-year-old slugger (MacIntyre) finally getting his chance in the bigs. ♥

13

Head to Tho

Curiosity is rewarded at stellar Vietnamese eatery

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vueweekly.com

Ever since a big purple sign went up on the south side of 34th Ave, just east of 91st Street, I just couldn't seem to get it out of my mind. Maybe it was the vibrant purple colour, maybe it was the unique way the letters curved and flowed, or maybe it was simply because it was advertising Vietnamese food. Whatever the case, this sign had lodged itself in my brain with a vengeance and was refusing to budge.

Needing to quash this unrelenting curiosity of mine, I pointed the car in the direction of **My Tho** on a recent Friday night. At the sight of that mesmerizing sign, I made a quick right turn into the strip mall muddle that is home to the restaurant. There were lots of parking stalls, but not much in the way of actual parking spots. A quick but frenzied hunt proved fruitful and in short order we were pulling open the generic glass door beneath another, smaller purple My Tho sign. Tantalizing aromas swirled around us and the owner, Phuc Trah (see profile on page 15), greeted us with a huge smile and showed us to a table right by the window. The blinds were closed, eliminating our view of the adjacent parking lot and that massive brick wall.

VIETNAMESE

MON - SAT (10:30 AM - 9 PM)

MY THO

The room itself was small and clean—plastic purple tablecloths and purple-and-green walls added a touch of oomph to the simple surroundings. Simple tables, simple chairs, un-simple flowers and the odd decoration completed the effect. Each table held its own assortment of utensils, chopsticks, napkins and sauces. Rather than being stark and functional, it was simple and comfortable.

Besides, we were there for the food. We launched straight into the menu and started debating our options. Although there were only an-extremely-manageable-for-a-Vietnamese-restaurant 42 options (plus specials and combos), it was still a daunting choice. So when Phuc graciously plunked a pot of tea on the table we decided to start with an assortment of nibbles to tide us over: Salad Rolls minus the pork (\$4.25), some Chà Giò Chay (vegetarian spring rolls, \$3.95)

and the Onion Cake (\$2.95)

OUR APPETIZERS arrived amidst the sounds of revving engines—Phuc's two children were tucked away in a corner, oblivious to anything but their video game, which added a nice, homey touch. A big, white, square plate appeared with a round, golden, deep-fried onion cake sitting right in the middle. It was neatly cut into four quarters, and four equally golden spring rolls radiated out from it like spokes on a wheel. The presentation of the salad rolls was simple as well, cut in half and served on a blue-and-white patterned plate. Little dishes of various sauces were served on the side.

While the rest of us scouted out the food, my husband dutifully placed the rest of our order. I'm almost embarrassed to list everything, but here goes: Bún Chả Giò Chay (more vegetarian spring rolls on vermicelli, \$7), Rice Noodle Soup with Chicken Breast (\$6.50), Grilled Skewers of Pork, Chicken and Beef (\$2.50 each), a Beef and Vegetable Stir-Fry with noodles (\$9.50) and, finally, a Chicken and Vegetable Stir-Fry with rice (\$9.50).

We quickly found out that deep-fried

also meant piping hot, so the salad rolls were our first appetizer of choice. My daughter dunked hers a bit too liberally in the accompanying sweet chili-garlic sauce. Her big eyes and shocked expression were ample evidence that the sauce was also quite hot. I dabbed my sticky bundle a bit more judiciously and found it to be very fresh and quite tasty, full of plump shrimp, crunchy bean sprouts, shredded lettuce and slippery noodles. I missed the distinct taste of Thai basil though.

The now slightly cooler spring rolls and onion cake proved to be a big hit. Both were golden and crispy, and deep-frying the onion cake gave it a nice crunch. We were still crunching away when the rest of our dishes started arriving. They took up every available square inch of our table, so we simply loaded up our plates and started munching, everyone sampling a bit of everything.

THE VERMICELLI BOWL was a mass of noodles topped with carrots, bean sprouts, lettuce, peanuts, green onions and more of the crunchy spring rolls. A side dish of home-made sauce added tang to the comforting mix of soft and

crunchy textures.

Equally impressive was the chicken soup. Chunks of tender chicken and tons of noodles were immersed in an extremely flavourful broth. A side dish full of Thai basil, bean sprouts and a lime wedge provided some entertaining customizing options—and kept the kids busy.

Both stir-fries had their own personality. On one square platter were slices of tender chicken, chunks of colourful carrots and pieces of cauliflower, served with a mound of white rice on the side. The cauliflower did a stellar job of soaking up the delicious sauce, although I'm not sure what was in it. I do know it was good. Loads of fresh cilantro were sprinkled over the top, adding a wonderfully distinct touch to the dish.

The beef stir-fry reminded me of beef and broccoli without the broccoli, or at least the sauce did. Tender strips of beef mingled with lots of noodles, some crunchy carrots and bean sprouts, and the odd piece of bok choy.

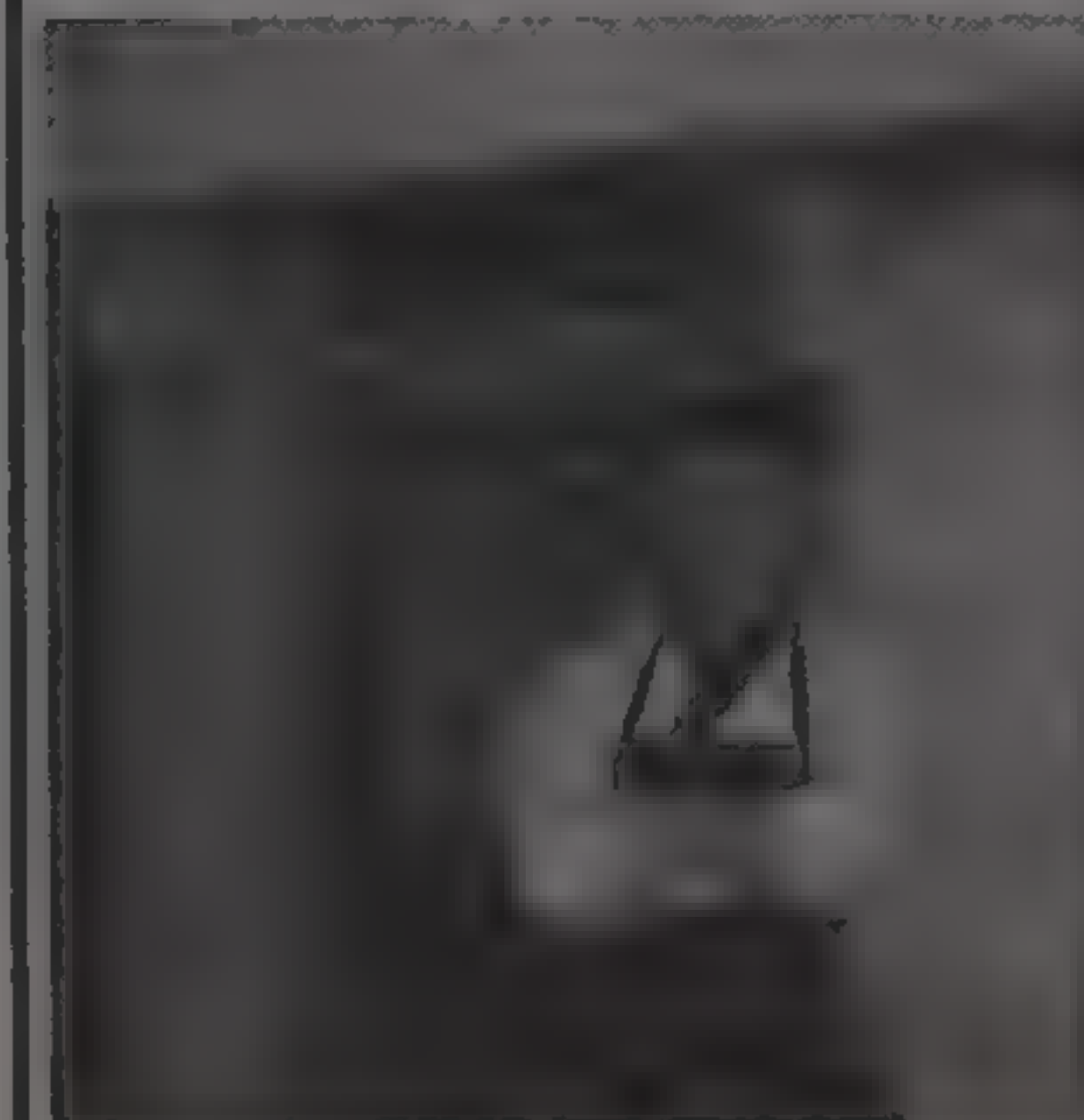
Last up were the grilled skewers. We were all stuffed, but couldn't resist at least a nibble. The caramelized sweet-and-salty exterior gave way to a succulent and tender interior. The chicken skewers were the unanimous favourite of the three varieties; my one daughter, who doesn't much like chicken, kept saying she had to have "just one more bite" of these—even though she was so full.

My Tho serves up tasty home-style Vietnamese cuisine in a laid-back comfortable atmosphere. And even though my curiosity is now satisfied, I still can't get this friendly little restaurant out of my mind. ▽

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Getting to Tho you

Tucked-away restaurant is a dream come true for Trah family

JAN HOSTYM / jan@vueweekly.com

Phuc Trah's dream is quietly tucked away amongst the commercial hodgepodge and mish-mash of strip malls along 34th Avenue. Blink and you might miss it, though you might miss it with eyes wide open, too: a big, boxy Insta-Rent building sits smack-dab in front of it, effectively obscuring it from the outside world. But Trah's My Tho is a restaurant well worth looking for.

Trah came to Canada from Vietnam in 1985, and with him came the dream of owning his own business—he just didn't know quite what it would be. So he settled down in Edmonton and lived his life, still thinking and pondering and wondering. The answer actually came in 1995; he just didn't know it at the time. That was the year a friend intro-

PROFILE

PHUC & TUYET TRAH
OWNERS/CHEFS, MY THO
9261 - 34 AVE, 780.988.2968

duced him to his future wife, via a picture. He liked what he saw in the photo, so he hopped on a plane and took a quick six-week trip back to Vietnam where he and Tuyet were married.

Phuc then returned to Canada and Tuyet joined him two years later. They said that Canada was "great and beautiful" and they enjoyed their life, but Phuc still had this little dream in the back of his mind. They'd work, they'd go home and they'd entertain friends and family. It took a friend to suggest that, since Tuyet was such a wizard in the kitchen, maybe they

should open up their own restaurant. Her many years of watching and then helping her grandfather and aunt cook had evidently paid off.

The restaurant has been open for just over six months now, and Phuc Trah is well aware that the location has its disadvantages. He smiled as he gazed out the window at the view: a massive wall of red bricks. He was warned numerous times by numerous people that it wasn't a good location, that nobody can see it, and if no one can see it, no one will come. But he shrugged his shoulders when he explained that the price was right and that they are in it for the long term. He's confident that his wife's cooking is so good that people will find them.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY VUONG

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PROFILE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

and then keep coming back.

So Tuyet cooks and Phuc looks after the customers. Six days a week, 10 to 11 hours a day. And they love it. They love that they own their own business and are living their dream. They also love that they get one whole day a week off (they are closed Sundays). Phuc spread his arms as we sat at a simple table in the middle of the simply decorated restaurant and smiled, "How you could not love it?"

Once they set up the restaurant, there wasn't much money left over for decorating, so they left the old paint on the walls (a rather pleasant combination of purple and green), bought some tables from Ikea, and added their own touches with the paintings, tablecloths and the odd decoration. It's clean and simple. Phuc says that once you've eaten Tuyet's food, they'll realize how good it is and they'll just have to come back—hopefully with friends.

FOR NOW: They want to put all their energy into the food. Fancy decorating may come later, but the food and the friendly atmosphere are what they want to be known for.

Business is already slowly increasing. They catered a wedding not long ago—for a Canadian/Indian couple with a passion for Vietnamese food—and some of the guests have already found their way to the restaurant. And the big, eye-catching purple sign that dominates a small section of 34th Avenue is also helping. The small 26-item menu that they started with has already grown to over 42 items, not including the daily specials.

When I asked them what made their restaurant different from the other Vietnamese restaurants in town, Tuyet said that it was home-style cooking, not restaurant cooking I didn't know what the difference was, so she eagerly jumped up and started heading for the kitchen—she wanted

to cook for me and show me first hand. Since it was 10:30 in the morning, I politely declined, but I did get a little lesson. Her home-style cooking contains no MSG and doesn't skimp on ingredients or cut any corners. Phuc said there are more bones in the broth for the soups, more lemongrass in the lemongrass chicken, more honey in the marinades for the meats, more everything in all the dishes and that results in more flavour everywhere. Typically, restaurant cooks use fewer ingredients than they would if they were cooking for themselves at home.

I have to give them credit for doing their research. Before opening My Tho, they spent a year eating out at the different Vietnamese restaurants around town, seeing what they liked and what they didn't like. Then they created their menu, decided to treat their customers like family and opened the doors.

As Tuyet got up to give me a little tour of the kitchen, a little person wandered down the hallway towards us. It turns out that their seven-year-old daughter Christina spends most of her days in the restaurant when her three-year-old son's daycare closes for the day, he joins them as well.

Once business picks up a bit, they are hoping to hire a bit more help so that Phuc can go home with the kids a bit earlier. Not Tuyet, though—she's not about to let anyone else into her kitchen. When I asked them if they'd ever hire another cook, Tuyet smiled and shook her head no. This restaurant is all about her cooking and she wants to keep it that way. It's the only way she can be sure the quality is there.

My Tho—named after the Vietnamese city where Tuyet is from—is a well-kept secret (for now), a family-run restaurant hidden away from the world behind a massive commercial monstrosity. Once word gets out about the fabulous food on offer (see review page 14), though, it'll only be a matter of time before people are bulldozing through that brick wall on the way to their door. ▽

A real meat market

Blain Verbeek's Buffalo Valley has everything you could want—even python

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vuwweekly.com

What do you do if you are experiencing an intense, all-consuming craving for something a bit out of the ordinary—perhaps a substantial chunk of alligator or a succulent slice of kangaroo? It's quite simple, really. Just motor over to Whitemud Crossing and stop in to see Blain Verbeek, owner of Buffalo Valley Variety Meats Inc. Specialty meats are his business, after all—and if one of those isn't quite exotic enough for you, python is always an option.

Buffalo Valley really does offer alligator, kangaroo and python, in addition to caribou, musk-ox, frog and ostrich. And while Verbeek keeps some of those intriguing items in the store, many (like the python, alligator and kangaroo) don't fly off the shelves as quickly as you might expect, so they are strictly special-order. That just means you might not be able to satisfy your craving immediately—you might have to show a touch of restraint and settle for something a bit more mundane (like the ostrich) until the object of your desire actually comes in.

Verbeek's personal favourite is the alligator, which unfortunately isn't hand-wrestled in the swamps of Florida. It's actually farm-raised solely for the purpose of eating. His preferred method of cooking it is a quick trip to the deep-fryer—the meat tends to be a bit dry and that helps keep it nice and moist. He also thought barbecuing might be another tasty option, but the pieces can be quite small and have a habit of falling through the grill.

But enough about all those other exotic meats. Buffalo Valley's specialty is bison, otherwise known as buffalo. Healthy, range-fed, chemical-free, organic buffalo. It's becoming a popu-

PROFILE

BLAIN VERBEEK
BUFFALO VALLEY VARIETY MEATS INC.
1116 34TH AVE. W. (AT WHITEMUD CROSSING)
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T6H 1G4

lar alternative to beef. This impressive nutritional profile—it's high in iron and protein and low in fat. "A lot of our customers are extremely health conscious," says Verbeek of his most popular seller. "They're aware of what they're putting in their bodies."

THE SHOP HAS a very friendly, laid-back atmosphere. Verbeek sat perched on a stool, baseball cap firmly planted on his head, while we spent part of the morning chatting. The door opened a number of times during our conversation and it seemed like he was on a first-name basis with anyone who had wandered through the door. They traded comments like old friends, and he jokingly told one of his customers that, "You can hop after eating that stuff" when they were discussing the ramifications of eating kangaroo.

Their location on a busy corner of a strip mall of Whitemud Crossing does give them a lot of walk-in customers, but it seems as though Verbeek's meats have attracted a devoted group of regulars.

Verbeek grew up on a farm where his family raised much of its own hormone- and antibiotic-free meat. After high school he decided to stay in the farming industry. He took a 19-week course at Olds College and graduated with his Meat Processing certificate.

He worked in the industry for a while and especially enjoyed his stint at a slaughterhouse—something about the kill aspect of the work

appealed to him. But, as he put it, "meat-cutting doesn't pay worth shit," so he abandoned the trade and worked in construction for awhile.

He had a change of heart when the previous owner of Buffalo Valley was looking for a meat-cutter and a friend recommended Verbeek. They worked out a reasonable wage agreement and the rest is pretty much history: Verbeek worked there for two years and then, when the previous owner wanted to sell, Verbeek decided to buy him out.

That was about three years ago. The store has diversified a bit since then—it used to focus solely on buffalo—but it is still committed to selling healthy, organic, hormone- and antibiotic-free meat.

I was curious why someone would make a special trip to Buffalo Valley rather than just pick up some buffalo at their local grocery store. After all, it does mean an extra trip. Verbeek looked at me like I was a bit crazy. "The taste, of course."

As he explained, grocery store buffalo are from feed-lots—which means very small pens with a large number of animals and feed that includes growth hormones and antibiotics. Buffalo Valley bison comes from Evansburg, where it is range-fed and organic. The result is a "totally different tasting meat." Or so he's told. He doesn't think he's ever eaten anything that you'd throw in your cart at a grocery store. Besides, Verbeek said that the two are totally different products: "You're not comparing apples to apples."

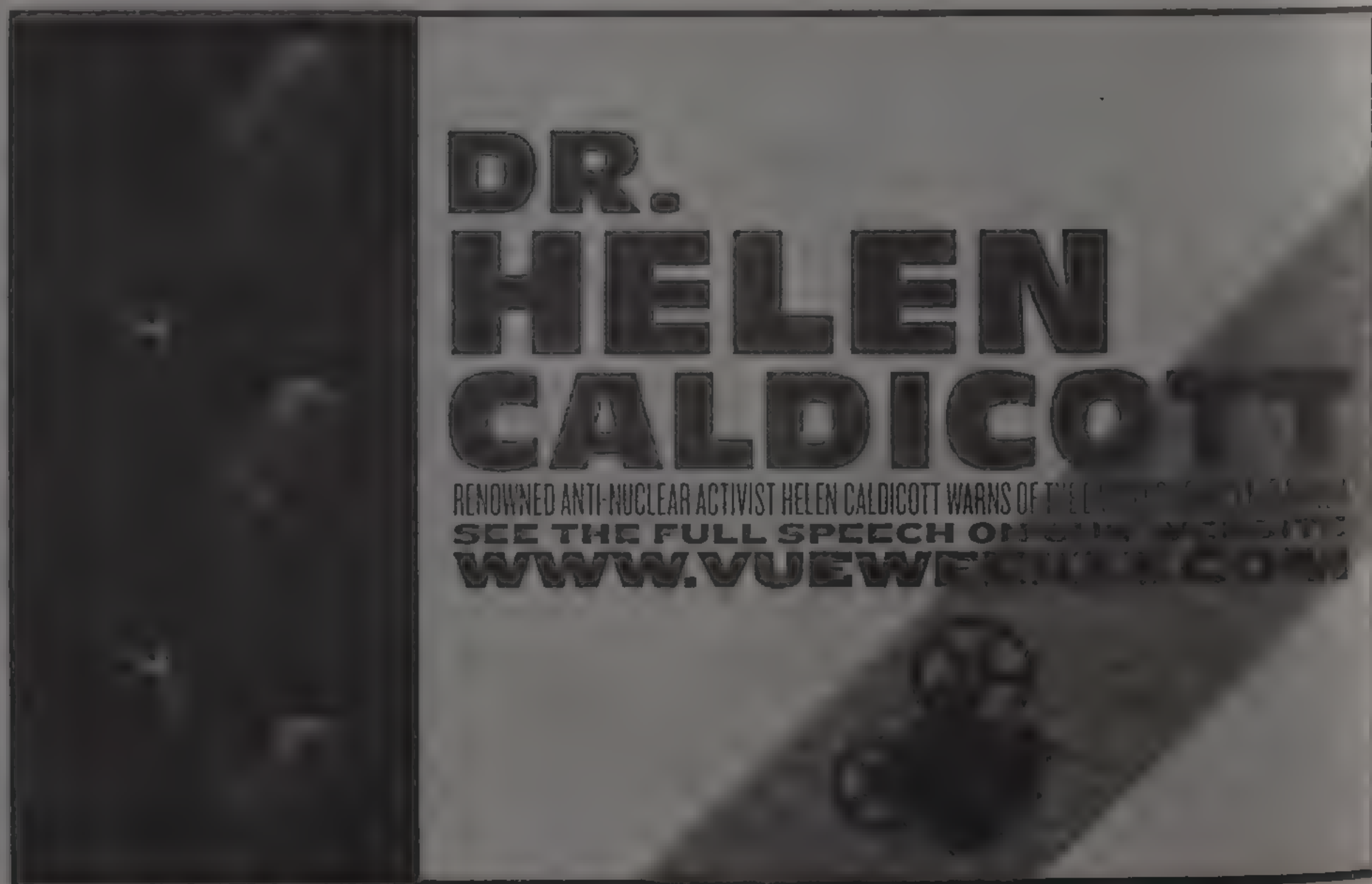
Aside from the exotic meats and the bison, Blain also makes an assortment of buffalo sausages and carries lamb from Spruce Grove, chicken from the Huttentes just north of Spruce Grove, homemade perogies—again, from out near Spruce Grove—and some seafood from Finn's in Sherwood Park. And that's just a sample of what he has to offer.

Buffalo Valley is definitely a specialty meat market, with products you'd be hard pressed to find anywhere else. If you are looking for that elusive kangaroo, stop in. It just may put the spring back in your step. ▽



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WINE TIPS

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BORDEAUX

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BORDEAUX

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wines that are concoctions with juice from as many as five or six grapes, but sometimes a winery discovers that the fruit of their labour deserves to stand on its own. The two wines I tried this week are excellent examples of the varying ways of producing wine.

The first is a Bordeaux from the right bank in Saint-Emilion. Wines from this bank are almost always Merlot based, but blended with other juice to round out their flavours and body. The Chateau L'Archance 2005 is an exception: the juice for this wine was entirely made from Merlot.

This inky deep red wine emitted a

rich, well rounded nose with solid structure and tannins. Hints of fruit were evident, particularly blackberries. The wine was extremely consistent with the relaxed fruit and deep,

full body. The fruit moves well through the palate and offers very well rounded flavours. Tannins support the flavours and offer a perspective of how this wine will be in time—I suspect even better. The flavours slow down to the back and leave

a nice and chewy residue, and the wine holds its own against others in its price range. With only 450 cases produced, this should be a wine purchased quickly and put away for a few years: it's nice now but should be so much bet-

ter in years to come.

NEXT, I GAVE the newly released La Frenz Reserve 2005 a try. This is a wine more typical of a Bordeaux-produced wine, with 60 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon, 30 per cent Merlot and 10 per cent Cabernet Franc. After spending 22 months in French oak, this wine was released to an excited demographic. Unfortunately, still relatively few stores in Edmonton carry this wine, but it was well worth the hunt: I was looking forward to seeing how it stood up to what I thought was an exceptional 2004.

The deep strawberry red wine oozed out an adventurous, vibrant nose with

an excellent base of tannins and fruit on top. The first sip offers a very deep structure, almost with the consistency of molasses. That maybe doesn't sound like an ideal description, but the body of the wine seems to coat every inch of the palate like a warm blanket and slowly releases hints of dark chocolate and vanilla.

The evolution is extremely nice, as it begins deep and allows the tannins to dissipate to what becomes a very fruity wine in the middle of the palate. As it reaches the back of the palate, the wine lightens and leaves pleasant memories causing me to reach for another taste.

La Frenz continues to produce what I think to be the best wine available in Canada with little to no fanfare. I suppose that's a good thing, though: it just means more for me! ▼

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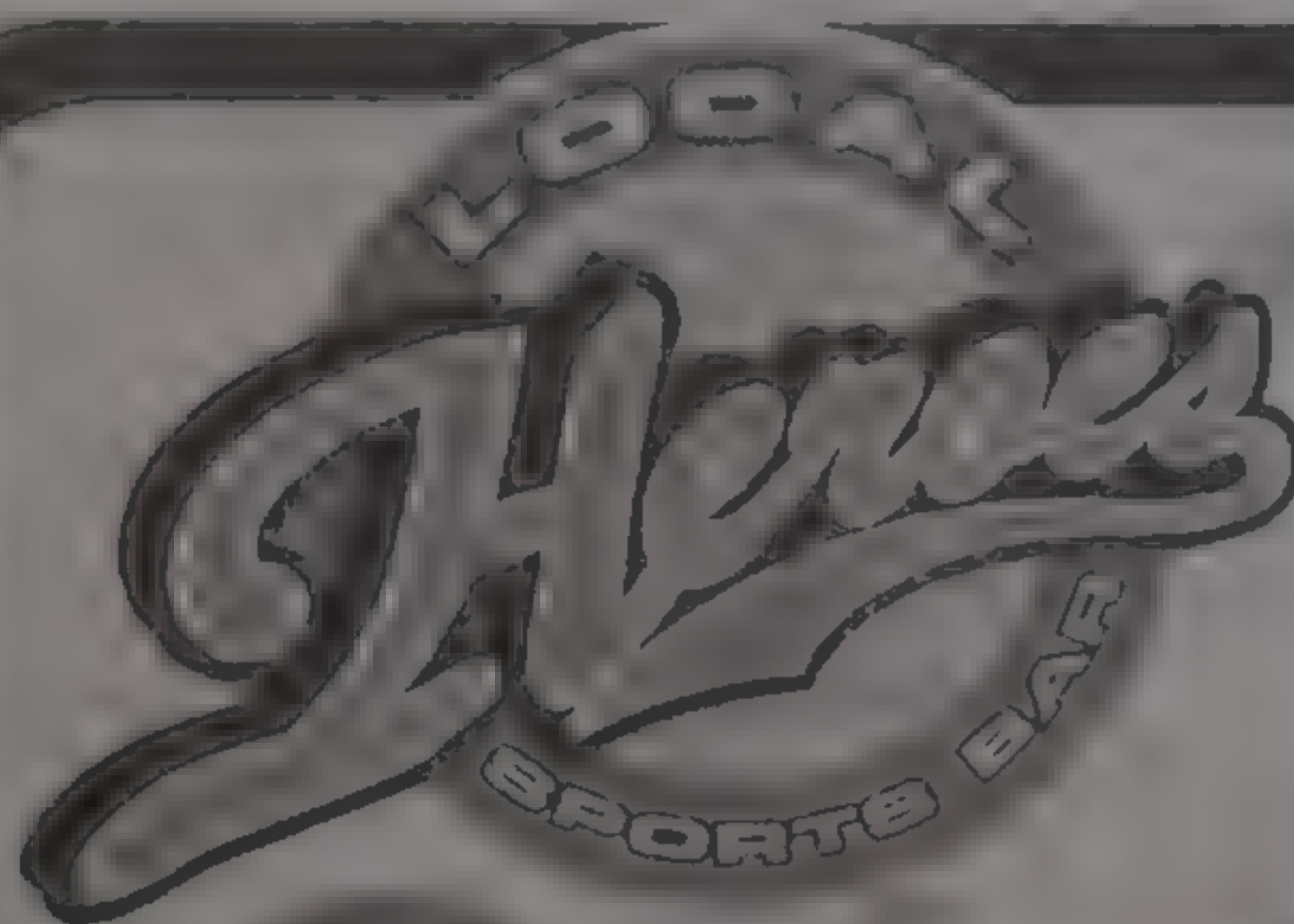
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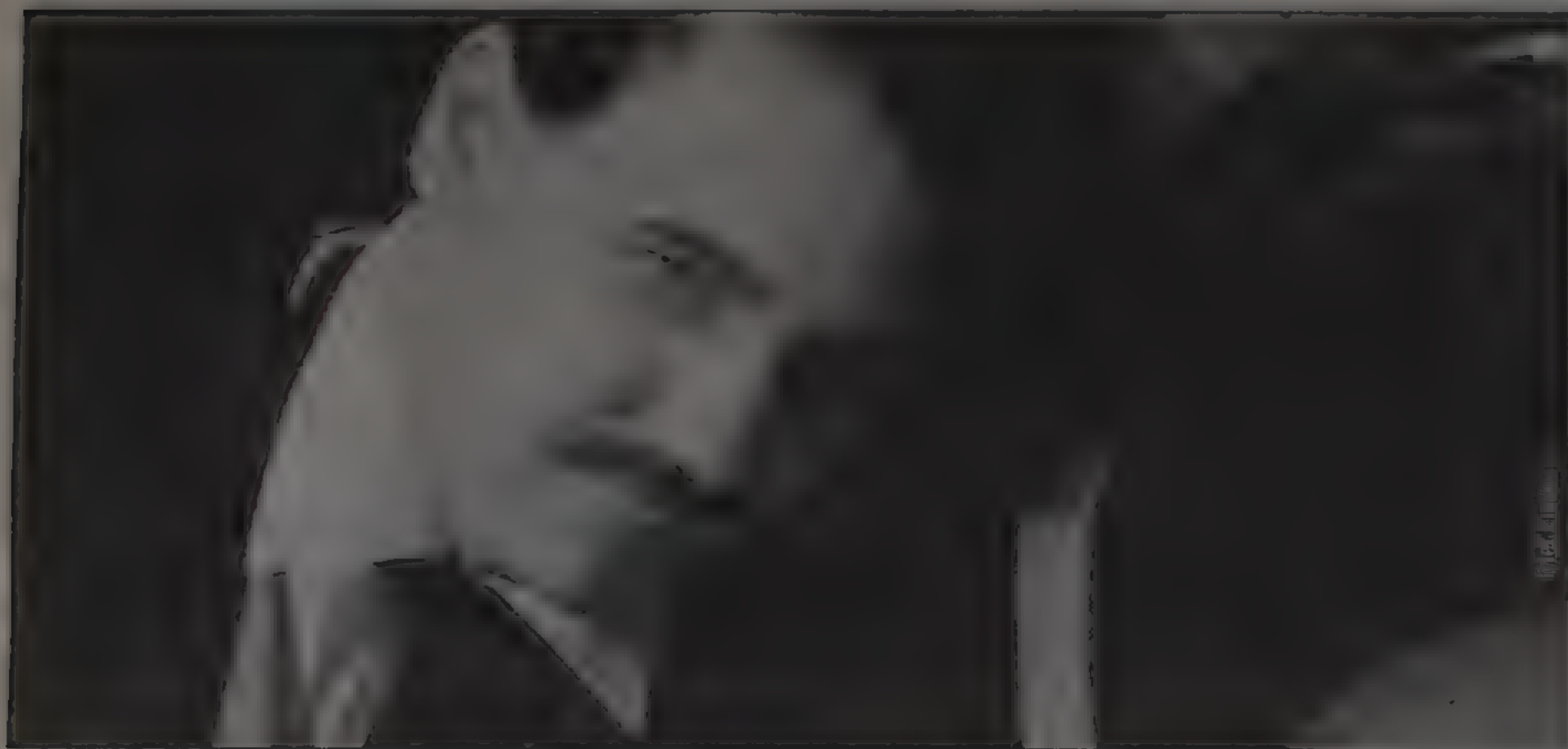
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Truth stories

Sharplin examines madness and reality in pair of premieres

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vueweekly.com

You'd think Scott Sharplin would want to let *Inferno Sonata* rest for a while: he just spent the summer touring his play across five Fringes, from Victoria to Ottawa. But he's ready to put it on one more time for hometown Edmonton audiences, after skipping us in his summer fringe hopping.

"The Edmonton Fringe could have been its premiere, but I chose to wait until I'd done all the other Fringes," Sharplin explains. "Mainly because I wanted it to be as tight and as polished as possible. You learn a lot about a show by doing it in different cities, different contexts and in different venues, so I thought this would be the way of getting the best possible product to Edmonton audiences."

He's bundling it together with another Edmonton premiere to complete his contribution to the Indie5 season: a pair of one-act plays tied to the ideas of truth and madness.

The fringe-tempered *Inferno Sonata* is first: it's a fevered one-man drama, written by and starring Sharplin, about the influential Swedish playwright/madman August Strindberg. Strindberg is known for helping develop realism in theatre, and later in life, expressionist theatre as well.

"When I read his work, I was struck by this change in his style, how he would go from one extreme of realism all the way to this surrealist style," Sharplin says. "I wanted to find out more about him, and why this change occurred in his writing, and basically from reading his journals,

the answer is he went crazy. But, y'know, it was an interesting crazy."

Sharplin exhumed and dramatized a particularly strange snapshot of his life: *Sonata* takes place during a period when Strindberg abandoned his second wife and the theatre (as he did several times in his life), and moved to Paris to begin practicing alchemy.

"He'd done this sort of thing a couple times before," Sharplin explains. "He would sort of break from his life and he'd go off and he'd get absorbed with something else. At one point he was a painter, at one point he was a photographer. But alchemy was really bizarre."

At the time, the pseudo-science had already been almost completely debunked, and he had little prior knowledge or sufficient guidance in the methods. But Strindberg was convinced he would be successful, and his journals (the play's title is lifted from one of them) claim success, despite a lack of any supportive evidence.

"[It's] a very distinctive journey, and I wanted to bring that to the stage, and explore this character," he says. "I've always been really fascinated by the lines between genius and madness."

THE SECOND PLAY on the bill, *Truth Factory*, takes a much more irreverent look at those same ideas. It's a comedy set in a *Weekly World News*-type tabloid: a pair of employees spend the workday in the newspaper's basement, "brainstorming bullshit" for people upstairs to write

PREVUE

THU, OCT 16 - SUN, OCT 26 (8 PM)
INFERNO SONATA / TRUTH FACTORY

DIRECTED BY RYAN HUGHES, JAMINE HODDER
WRITTEN BY SCOTT SHARPLIN
STARRING SHARPLIN, HUGHES, CODY PORTER
CATALYST THEATRE (8529 GATEWAY BLVD)
\$12-\$14

about (and, subsequently, for people to buy in supermarket checkouts). They bicker a little, on how much truth, if any, to inject into their stories. Then some of their ridiculous headlines start coming true.

"Like Strindberg, they start to get a little paranoid, and it forces them to question the nature of reality," Sharplin says. "If two guys in a basement making stuff up equals reality, how stable is anything around us?"

Sharplin wrote *Truth Factory* five years ago for Calgary's Lunchbox Theatre, but hasn't had a chance to resurrect it until now ("There aren't a lot of theatres in this city that do one-act plays," he says). There have been a few necessary updates to the pop culture and political references, but the script's ideas remain largely untouched, which is why Sharplin thinks it pairs well with *Inferno*.

"*Truth Factory* takes up a lot of the same questions as *Inferno Sonata*, but it deals with them in entirely different ways, in a much more comic, slapstick kind of approach to questions of reality and madness," he says. "I thought that after the darkness of *Inferno Sonata*, it would be nice to take some of those questions and make light of them a little bit." ▼



Now hear this

Waterdale's *Children of a Lesser God* refuses to take the easy way out

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

Upon seeing *Children of a Lesser God* at the Waterdale Playhouse, it will come as no surprise that the theatre company decided to begin its 50th anniversary season by remounting this production. The play is difficult and somewhat of a risk for Waterdale—especially when one might think they would rather choose some catchy and campy musical that will bring the house down and coast through such a milestone—but the potential payoff is vast. For the most part, *Children of a Lesser God* achieves that payoff.

The play happens in the mind of James Leeds (Daniel Kim), a young teacher at a deaf school, but the play is truly about his student, Sarah Norman (Lisa Hawkins), who eventually becomes his wife. Upon marrying, the two move across the street from the deaf school at which they met and James continues teaching while Sarah becomes a housewife. Though they are only living across the street, they might as well be living a world away as Sarah becomes nearly completely cut off from the deaf culture which she left and refuses to give up her identity to join the hearing world.

Though the play drags slightly throughout the first act, the production was for the most part mesmerizing. Employing deaf and hard-of-hearing actors in the appropriate roles—most of whom were tak-

REVUE

UNTIL SAT, OCT 18
CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD
DIRECTED BY JUDY UNWIN
WRITTEN BY MARX MUDOFF
STARRING LISA HAWKINS, DANIEL KIM

ing to the stage for the very first time—the chemistry between the actors is incredible given the communication challenges that must have happened in rehearsal. Daniel Kim even had to learn enough sign language so that his character could convincingly communicate with his students and his wife.

THE SECOND ACT moves much more swiftly as Sarah is driven to her breaking point by the pressure she feels from both the hearing and deaf communities she interacts with. This descent and the physical manifestation of frustration is ably handled by Hawkins, whose expressiveness carries what might have seemed like silence in the hands of a less talented person. In a smaller but scene-stealing role, Tim Marriot provides the perfect amount of flippant acidity to the condescending headmaster, Mr. Franklin.

An admirable and successful way to open the 50th anniversary season of a theatre company known for risk-taking, *Children of a Lesser God* is a play that challenges the audience to see a person as a person beyond the collection of labels. ▼

Fault towers

Marina Endicott's second novel is just good, period

by Alexia / alexia@vuwweekly.com

Marina Endicott's newest novel, *Good to a Fault*, is an independent publisher's dream come true. The novel was acquired and published by Freehand Books, a small Calgary-based press. Despite these humble beginnings, *Good to a Fault* has been nominated for one of Canada's most prestigious literary awards, the Scotiabank Giller.

Not that Endicott, a professor at Camrose's Augustana University who recently moved to Edmonton from Cochrane, is any stranger to acclaim: her debut novel *Open Arms* was short-listed for the Books in Canada first novel award, and *Fault* has already won critical acclaim from numerous publications across the country.

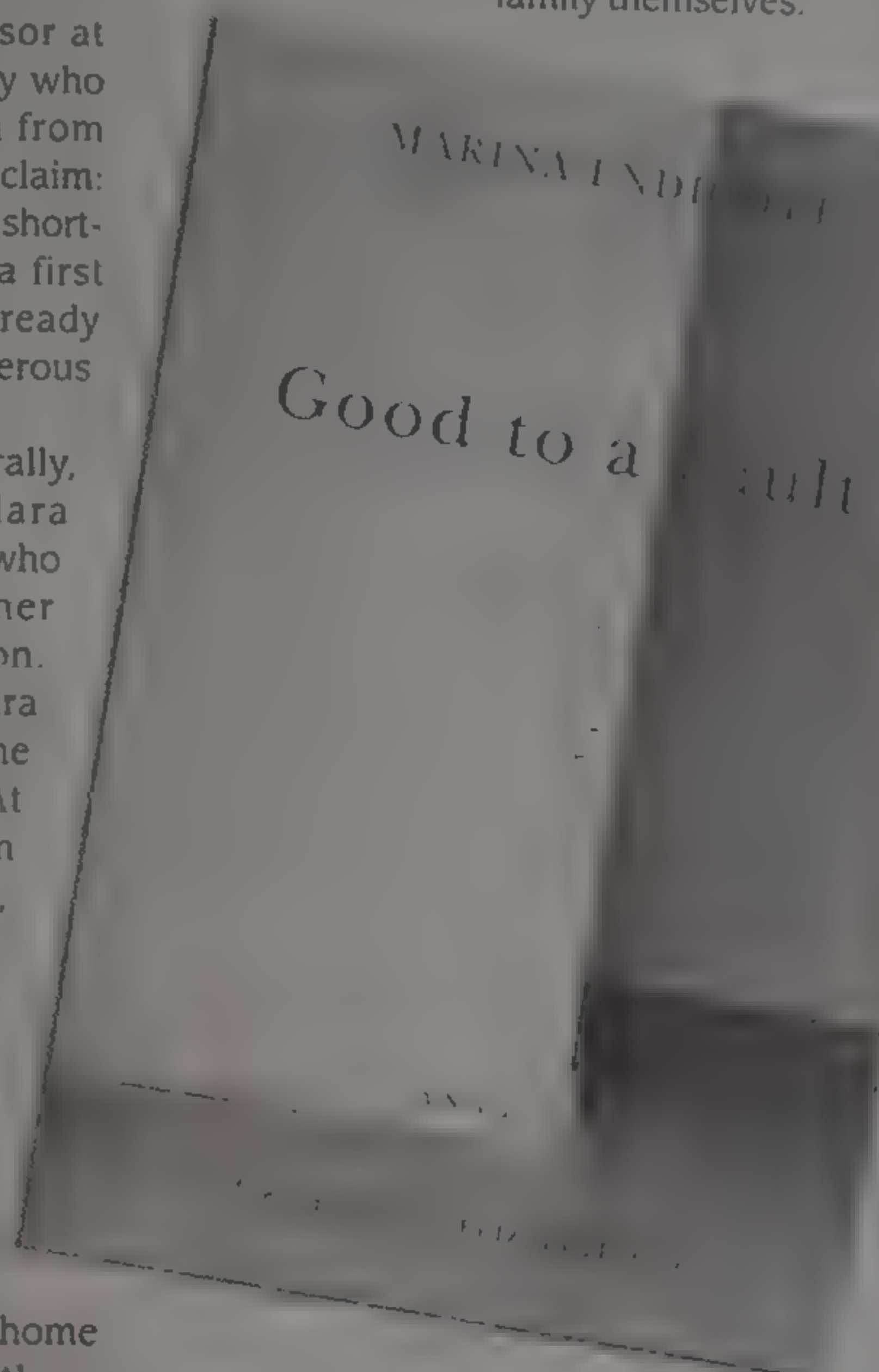
The novel begins, quite literally, with a bang and a crash. Clara Purdy is a 43-year-old woman who lives alone in the house of her deceased mother in Saskatoon. While driving across town, Clara hits another car, and injures the mother of a family of three. At the hospital, the medical team discovers Lorraine, the mother, is gravely ill with an advanced form of cancer. Clara learns the family has been living in their car, and was travelling from Winnipeg to Fort McMurray, where they hoped to obtain employment and a better life. Heavy with guilt and responsibility, Clara opens her empty home to the family, and moves the three children, their father and their grandmother into her home. Clara is helped in her effort by her neighbours, extended family members and the priest at her church. As she takes in the family and intertwines their lives

BOOKS

GOOD TO A FAULT

BY MARINA ENDICOTT
FREEHAND BOOKS
376 PP, \$25.95

with her own, Clara discovers new meaning and a sense of purpose. Yet her motives are questioned by those around her, and by Lorraine and her family themselves.



ENDICOTT'S WRITING is real istic, not unlike the writing of the now-deceased Canadian literary doyenne, Carol Shields, who wrote about "ordinary people doing extraordinary things." Endicott writes in a style that

easily encapsulates the minute details of everyday life. This novel takes an overarching look at the effects of every character's actions, as the viewpoint switches between various characters, and allows the reader to get a glimpse of the thoughts of the core players in the story. Though it's a domestic story, there is a sense of urgency to the narrative, and the reader is constantly waiting for the situation to change, and for a fragile situation to deteriorate.

This sense of urgency is never lost, even when things appear to be stable. The story never seems resolved, until the final page of the novel.

Questions and themes of goodness and selfless responsibility make up the core theme of *Good to a Fault*. The overarching themes and questions raised by this book are what make it such a compelling read. The story subtly asks questions which force the reader to draw a line between selflessness and selfishness. How far should a person go for the sake of charity and human kindness? What does a person stand to lose by extending kindness to others?

Endicott's book is one that asks questions of both the central characters and the reader. The novel doesn't follow a typical pattern, and the story doesn't focus on flourishes or fanfare, but around the subtle nuances of everyday life. This is a novel that delivers and treats its reader with kindness and goodness. Hopefully, the Giller committee will also be favourable to the book on awards night. ▽



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Chinese whispers

Brilliant Strokes glimpses a great culture in ink and paint

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vancouverweekly.com

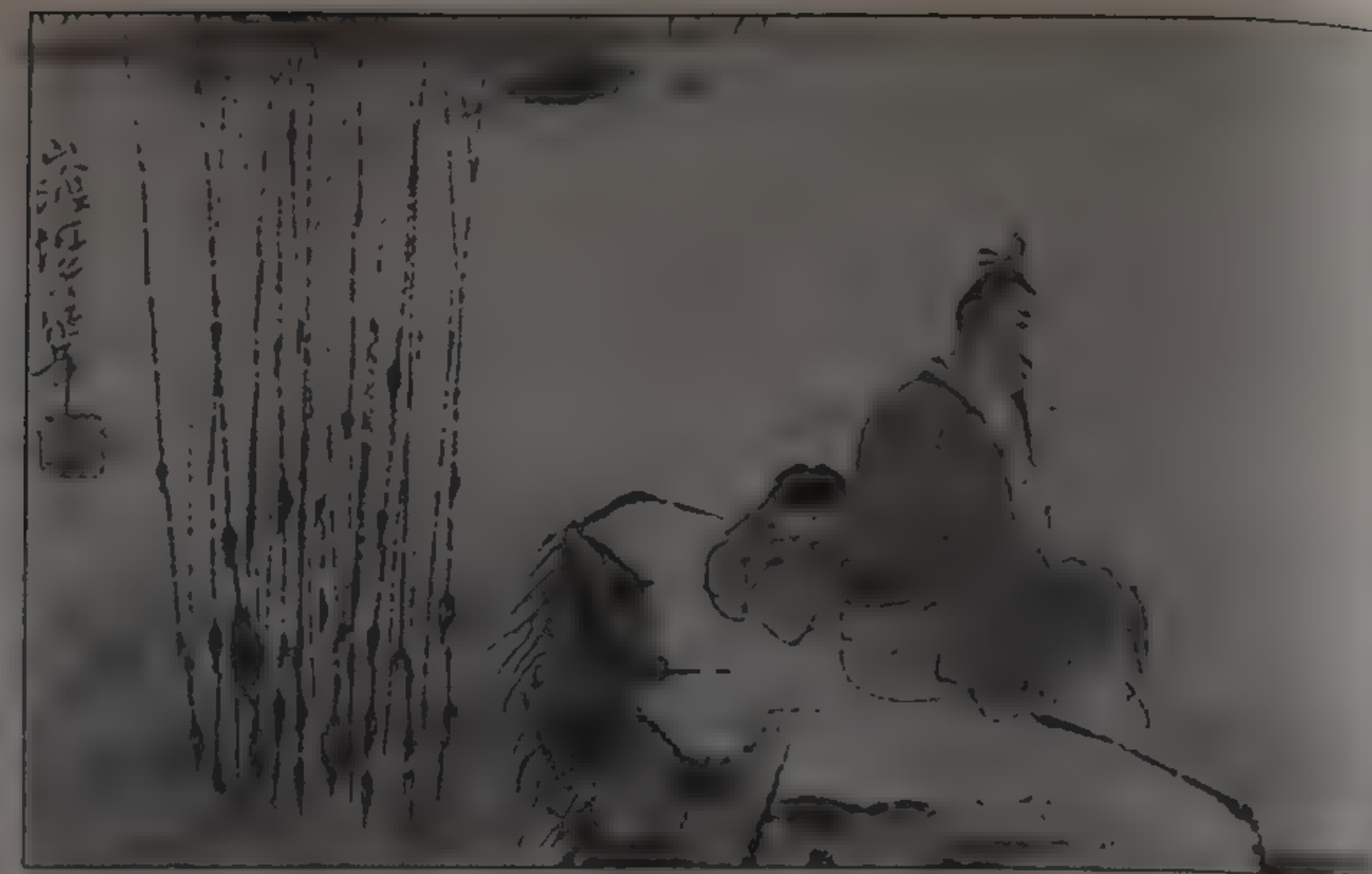
It's been a year since the intimately scaled, administratively named Gallery A opened at the U of A's TELUS Centre, its inaugural show drawn from the Mactaggart Collection, a broad-ranging amassment of Chinese garments, artwork and other pieces collected and donated by a local philanthropic couple. Gallery A's back rooms are devoted to housing the Mactaggart treasures, and its keepers made it clear that *Dressed To Rule*, an exhibition focused on centuries-old Chinese court clothes, was intended as the first of many explorations into and interpretations of the collection's offerings.

VIZ ARTS
UNTIL SAT. JAN. 24
BRILLIANT STROKES
CHINESE PAINTINGS FROM
THE MACTAGGART ART COLLECTION
GALLERY A, TELUS CENTRE (87 AVE & 111 ST)

An echo of that first show is in *Brilliant Strokes: Chinese Paintings from the Mactaggart Art Collection*. One of the initial pieces in *Brilliant Strokes* is a folio page containing a lavish illustration of a ceremonial robe from the mid-18th century: a lush, yellow, heavy silk garment elaborately embroidered on both front and back with knotwork and vivid imagery, including a regal, twisting golden dragon. The piece is a highly stylized code

that, at the time, contextualized its wearer in the administrative, historic and spiritual universe of the Chinese court. The person within the robe had not just a rank, but a literal place in the universe, a role in intricate social machinery that anchored the real to the mythological and bound a sprawling empire, populated with diverse ethnic and tribal groups, together under a strong centralized bureaucracy.

The Chinese dynastic kingdoms of the 1300s to late-1800s were refined, sophisticated administrative realms, with the arts deeply enmeshed in social and state, public and private life. Although the great beauty of its artworks is apparent to even casual



viewers, appreciation is enriched by understanding of the cultural nuances vibrating beneath the brushstrokes.

The university-supported curators excel at delivering this understanding: *Dressed to Rule* was accompanied by reader-friendly didactics illuminating the general cultural mindset and decoding the rigid social order embodied in the costumes, while *Brilliant Strokes* features engaging panels on historic Chinese artists and different kinds of creative practices, subject matter and regional derivation, and how its scrolls and album leaves were received by viewers. (Both Mactaggart shows have catalogues available, and much online at museums.ualberta.ca/mactaggart. It's unfortunate Jim Corrigan's spectacular exhibit of historical Japanese woodblock prints, drawn from the campus-based Print Study Centre and shown in the gallery this spring, didn't also get a catalogue.)

THE SCROLLS AND ALBUMS in *Brilliant Strokes* vary in style and subject and date from the 1400s to early 1900s. Several pieces agree with the popular imagination of "classic" Chinese paintings: idyllic vistas and majestic panoramic scenery, mist-shrouded cliffs and valleys dotted with terraced complexes of paper, silk and bamboo and garden courtyards that resonate melodiously with the landscape. But curator Dr Ka Bo Tsang (on loan from the Royal

Ontario Museum) selected pieces that show breadth. Viewers can contrast "Admiring an Autumn View at Sunset" and "Summer Retreat at Lakeside Village," near-contemporaneous scroll works of similar dimensions. "Autumn" is a floating mountainous landscape of pearly silk, ethereal and pale, all fine lines softened by foggy clouds. "Summer" is ruddy, densely lined and vividly coloured, with a graphic, printed look. misty cliffs and water dotted with the presence of man: a solitary figure in an upper room of a grand house, a fisherman, an ox rider leading livestock. European influence permeates "Battle Scene from the Nian Rebellion," a gore-free but nevertheless violent tableau of a peasant massacre painted a decade after the 1860s events, while "Sparrows in a Bamboo Grove" revels in the minutia of nature, jagged bamboo sheltering fuzzy alive-seeming sparrows. A courtesan's "Orchids, Bamboo and Rocks" magnifies pebbles, flowers and grasses to a poignant landscape, severe and gorgeous.

Through only 18 pieces, *Brilliant Strokes* offers remarkable diversity in showing us another facet of the Mactaggart Collection and the complex world of the Middle Kingdom of the last millennium. Collection caretakers are using their resources wisely, letting viewers discover this fascinating culture through deep but highly focused slices. ▽

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Getting M:STy down south

ART PRAIRIE ARTSTERS

As a festival blogger for the fourth biennial Mountain Standard Time Performance Art Festival, I spent the last two weekends travelling the QE2 down to Lethbridge and Calgary, respectively. Living in a festival city where the peak of festivities has just finally come to a full, I find myself in yet another festival, but one of an entirely different atmosphere.

Down in Lethbridge, where the new media reputation precedes its windy coulee corridors, the festival included in its programming the world premiere of local artist David Hoffos' *Scenes From a House Dream*. Taking up both floors of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery and maximizing a full three weeks of install after five years in the making, the exhibition drew out the close-knit arts community and plenty of visiting onlookers wanting a sneak peak before its national tour kicks off at the National Art Gallery of Canada.

Nothing seen during the day on a dead walk through the town would prepare for the night. While walking around looking for the elusive Trapdoor artist-run centre, I eventually stumbled upon it in the basement of the Trianon Gallery, where emerging Canadian artist Andrew Taggart opened his latest exhibition. Taggart, who is currently completing a unique joint MFA in Norway with his wife (who as it turns out I knew from a stint during an

arts festival in Edmonton), was surrounded by friends and family who drove down from Calgary. Although not part of M:ST programming, but just serendipitous timing, they shared similar minded audiences who would otherwise remain alien to one another.

THE OTHER two performances that night included Calgary-based Angela Silver, who punched the carbon-paper-lined entrance corridor with red Everlast boxing gloves customed with an electric typewriter set across its knuckles. The corporeal execution of imprinting text has been an ongoing investigation for Silver, especially in terms of text and its function in society and the evolution of tools used in the creation of text. Although the performance itself was quite nonplus, the marks left by the carbon paper created a hieroglyphic chart in the liminal space between the gallery and the street.

The other performance took place in the Parlour Window space, the front window display/gallery of Hoffos' studio space that sits on top of an original opium den just a few blocks off the main street. Performed and arranged by Calgary-based Wednesday Lupypciw, whose family tree traces itself back to Lethbridge, she pays homage to her mother in the form of a living tableau as she plays out a teenage scenario filled with Ouija board spooks and mimed telephone conversations that echo back on a video loop.

I would next run into Lupypciw during the Adrian Stimson performance in Cal-

gary and again at the Glenbow, where she was volunteering for the Movement Movement's "Run the Glenbow Museum." I also ran into Cindy Baker, Renato Vitic and others, as the festival rolled on over a course of two weeks and two cities. Artists and administrators turned volunteers and spectators, as expected, but the audience throughout both weekends grew beyond the same handful of consistent faces, with many new individuals trailing in and out for each event and performance regardless of the overall umbrella festival mentality.

Part of my personal burnout for festivals is the excuse it has to show weaker works alongside one or two headliners, simply spanning both time and space as encouraged by the recent increases to festival funding that privileges the idea of presenting culture rather than its creation. Each M:ST event, unique on its own and strong enough to draw a respectable audience—which may have been happenstance, with several other arts conferences on the go—nevertheless pulled audiences from across the board. The festival did not boast itself before the work or its artists, but emphasized each work in its own rightful merit and critical context that can and should proudly stand on its own and be discussed within a consciously programmed festive atmosphere. ▽

Amy Fung is the author of *prairieartsters.com*. Read her reviews of M:ST at *mstfestival.blogspot.com*

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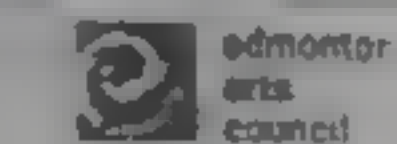
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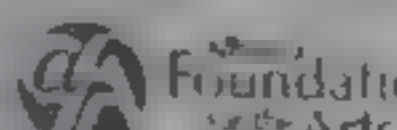
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PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vancouverweekly.com

For its 18th season, the *Die-Nasty* improv collective is raising the revolutionary tri-colour. They've done a season set in ancient Rome, and the glitz 'n' glam of 1930s Hollywood. *Die-Nasty* has created a fictional, Oilers-ish hockey team to root for, and last year, even came full-meta-circle by setting themselves in a daytime soap-opera. But this season, the Canadian Comedy Award-winning company has dug into the history books and located their season-long improvised soap opera in the lead-up to the French revolution.

"We're returning to full period costume, and wigs and whatnot," says Mark Meer, one of the troupe's core members. "The audience seems to like that—that was one of our deciding factors. They like to see us try to improvise in hilarious and impractical costumes."

Meer himself is donning clergy robes for the occasion, playing Cardinal de Sade (cousin of Marquis de Sade) in each weekly episode of improvised debauchery. Or at least that's who he's starting as;

previous seasons have seen characters slip into comas, get tossed into jail, killed off or otherwise invalidated, leaving the actors to create fresh personas to keep the overarching story afloat.

That soap opera motif of "anything can happen" lends itself well to the revolutionary era. Audiences might bear witness to some particularly grim stage exits.

"With the French revolution, we've got a good chance of seeing characters beheaded," Meer suggests. "[Director Dana Andersen] and I have a couple of different scales of guillotine being built."

Meer has been with the company since the third season. He was an improviser with RapidFire Theatre who was invited to join after guesting in the company's weekendlong *Soap-A-Thon*. Since then, he's seen plenty of comings and goings himself: director Dana Andersen—a founding member of the company—is the company's fourth ring-leader, after Ian Ferguson, Stuart Lemoine and Trevor Anderson.

There have also been plenty of guests who have popped up over the years: Mike Myers is a particularly high-profile example, but *Firefly* and *Serenity* star Nathan Fillion is a *Die-Nasty* alumnus, and SCTV's Joe Flaherty liked the format so much he started an improvised soap of his own down in Los Angeles, which Meer, and fel-



low *Die-Nasty*-ers Belinda Cornish and Donovan Workun have taken part in.

So there's plenty of chance for an unexpected celebrity appearance—but even those on guestlist may have to watch their necks. You never know who's going to lose their head.

"Unless they're playing the executioner," Meer states, before changing his mind. "But y'know, the French revolution was a turbulent time. Not even the executioner was safe."

LITFEST

EDMONTON'S INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL
THU, OCT 16 - SUN, OCT 19; VARIOUS VENUES
WWW.LITFESTALBERTA.ORG

ALEXIS KIENLEN / alexis@vancouverweekly.com

Edmonton's International Literary Festival, colloquially known as LitFest and celebrating its third birthday this year, is unparalleled and unduplicated in Canada for one simple reason: it's the only one of the country's fall literary festivals that focuses exclusively on creative non-fiction. That's something of a feather in its

cap, according to Interim Festival producer David Cheoros.

"Forty per cent of the books published are non-fiction," he said. "It's definitely a growing form, and we're really happy to showcase authors who are focusing on non-fiction."

For many years, non-fiction was seen as the ugly stepsister of fiction, but non-fiction titles are attracting a wider number of readers, and publishers who want to supply the demand. Cheoros emphasized the support of the Writers Guild of Alberta, and Edmonton's writing community, both active participants in this year's LitFest.

The 18 events in the festival, held at a variety of locations downtown, blend together a mix of local, provincial and international authors.

"We have strong local representation," said Cheoros. "In some cases, local authors may not be the featured authors, but they've stepped forward to moderate panels and host events. If you're not celebrating the people who live and work where you are, you're doing something wrong."

Authors are also represented at the

provincial level. One example of an Alberta author who will be participating is natural history writer Sid Marty of Pincher Creek. Marty's most recent book, *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, won the 2008 Grant McEwan Literary Arts Award prize this September. Another Albertan author who is gaining international attention is Calgary's Chris Turner, whose first book, *Planet Simpson*, was a worldwide bestseller. His second book, *The Geography of Hope*, shares success stories from the frontlines of the worldwide movement for sustainable living and has been featured on CBC radio.

International authors appearing include Simon Winchester, a British/American author whose seven titles have gained him an enormous following. Winchester will be appearing onstage in a solo event, while Robert Stone, an American author with nine books to his name, will take part in several panel discussions.

LitFest runs during the evening and day to accommodate a wide variety of audiences, said Cheoros. A number of the events are for children, while some evening events include film or music. Many events are free of charge, or have low ticket prices to accommodate patrons.

Still, it's the emphasis on non-fiction defines the festival's nature and atmosphere. Attendants are encouraged to think about issues and engage in debates.

"One of the things I've worked hard to embrace is the importance of conversation to the festival. It's much more about dialogue, and that affects everything, from the way we set up the room to the style of panel moderation," said Cheoros. "We invite people to come and chat with us." ▽

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The passion of the daele

Paul Gross's *Passchendaele* reveals a fierce commitment to Canada's stories

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com

I might have offended Paul Gross. At the very least I struck a nerve, as I kicked off our interview by babbling my way into an inquiry of the cinematically ideological issues in his new film *Passchendaele*, a dramatization of Canada's strategic though costly victory in the infamous First World War battle. I felt like a heel.

"What does it matter if we compare it to an American war film," Gross replies, "Or a German or an Australian or a South Korean war film? It is a film of us, and it's got the things in it that need to be there to tell that story."

Mostly, I was curious how Gross measured the film beside big war spectacles like *Saving Private Ryan* or *Flags of Our Fathers*, not only because they cost a significant amount to produce (though Gross's film cost \$20 million, a paltry figure by Hollywood standards, it is the most expensive Canadian movie to date) but each also attempts to assert a historical stance in the multiplex through a portrayal of heroes. How different is it when Canadians tell it?

"First of all, it's not an American story, it's our story," Gross notes, "I think the nature of heroism is different, because we don't see it the same way. I think the heroism here is largely self-effacing, and is actually about honest sacrifice and the love that can drive sacrifice."

Caroline Dhavernas, *Passchendaele*'s female lead, is seated comfortably on the sofa next to Gross, and elucidates the Canadian nature of the film by referring to some of the stops it has made on its brief cross-country tour.

"[Veterans in Winnipeg who saw the film] ask the question, 'Why hasn't this been done before?'" Dhavernas states, "I don't think people realize. Do people know we don't have the ability to come up with these budgets unless we're very patient, determined, and are very passionate like Paul."

"And psychotic," Gross adds.

"People are so happy and moved that it's finally being done," Dhavernas says, "[The veterans] didn't say much because they're not that kind of men—they don't ask for stuff to be made about them."

DESPITE HIS DEFENCE of its inherent Canadianness, it's a conversation that



WAR

OPENS FRI, OCT 17

PASSCHENDAELE

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PAUL GROSS
STARRING GROSS, CAROLINE DHAVERNAS

Gross wishes we could move beyond, instead focusing on the art itself.

"I think we think about that too

much," Gross shakes his head. "One thing I'm never going to do about this film is apologize for it, and I'm not going to try to hide it. I think it's fucking great

"One of the things we do in English Canada way too fucking much is apologize for what we do," he continues. "Almost all of our films come out and say, 'I'm sorry, I've got a film

I'd like you to see.' We were just in Québec, and there's no apology there. That's why that culture is strong, and it needs to be embraced with the same kind of confidence by people like you. I think we overthink things in our cultural output."

Gross doesn't see that as a necessarily Canadian trait, either.

"I think it has become something

we do, and I've seen it get worse over the course of my career."

From our conversation, it's readily apparent that, despite the supposed grandeur of the production, Gross is sensitive and defensive about his work, a trait unique to a sincerely creative individual who approaches cultural rhetoric with rigour and confidence. ▼

REVUE

The opening sequence of *Passchendaele*, a genre-influenced centre piece for this year's Remembrance Day, informs the rest of the film by paring down the art of war to its essentials. A small number of Canadian soldiers under attack by a machine gun manned by some hidden Germans use any possible tool to fight back: rocks, hand grenades, bayonets and, ultimately, an attempt at a truce, the latter which fails until one man is left standing. The film's hero Michael Dunn (Gross) ends up face to face with a young, blue-eyed Gap model of an enemy pleading for his life, which results in a gruesome, split-second blade through his skull. The rest of *Passchendaele* follows Dunn in what the audience is free to decide is his redemption, from shell shock to finding love to taking responsibility for the fate of another young soldier.

There are no easy answers in *Passchendaele*, despite its seemingly conventional brand of story-

telling, which initially takes Dunn back home to Calgary during wartime. Amidst the fronts of historic buildings like the Union Bank and Empress Theatre, the city folk demonstrate their patriotism by blasting the honour of young men like David Mann (Joe Dinicol), an asthmatic whom Dunn refuses to draft. Despite its supposed community, Dunn feels the pressure of its hypocrisy and finds solace in listening to the rants of his legless friend Royster (Gil Bellows) and attempting to court Mann's nurse sister Sarah (Dhavernas). Meanwhile, Mann ignores class restraints by carrying on a hidden affair with Cassie (University of Alberta graduate Meredith Bailey) the daughter of Dunn's superior. All this until a family secret is revealed that suddenly identifies David and Sarah with the German enemy. Quite the soap opera, I know.

This second act sets the stage for Dunn's return to battle, once Mann finds his way into getting drafted. The rest, quite frankly, is history, as the soldiers are sent to the namesake battle where Canadian soldiers

were primarily victorious. Even though *Passchendaele* acknowledges the inherent pride of our effort, the grueling and meticulously directed war zone is less triumphant than it is gory and traumatic. Conflict emerges on both emotional and military fronts, once Dunn realizes Mann's fumbling attempt at heroism and re-encounters Sarah at the camp (which quickly turns *Passchendaele* into a fierce bodice-ripper).

Complications of construction of Canadian historical identity through dramatizations are not an issue in *Passchendaele*, which moves full-speed ahead in the certainty of its production (unlike, say, Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*, which moves between several complicated stories to share Canada's part in the Armenian genocide of WWI). But audiences are sure to appreciate *Passchendaele* for being simply well-made, casting Gross in the Eastwood-Spielbergian role of proud, shameless filmmaker (who even co-wrote Sarah Slean's billowy ballad in the closing credits). Even as a war epic, it's not looking for a fight. —JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com

PRINCESS THEATRE
10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

THE GUTLESS
NIGHTLY @ 7:30 & 9:10PM
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RATED PG (PARENTAL STRONG CAUTION SOME MATERIAL MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 10 YEARS)

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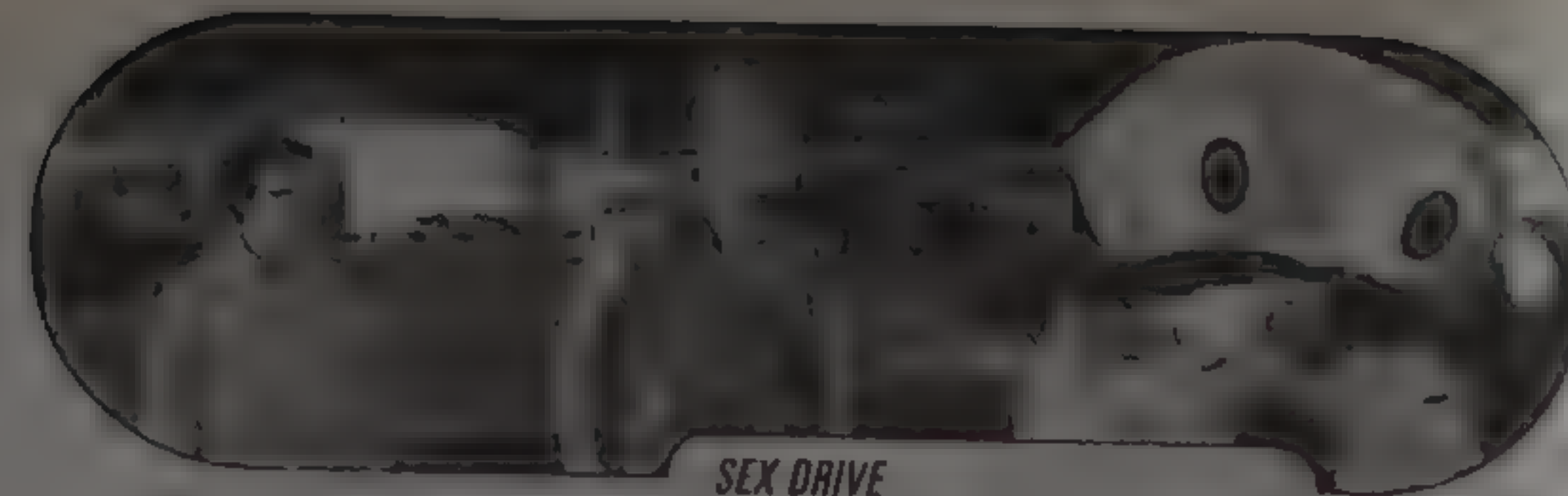
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QUICK REVIEWS

FILM CAPSULES



SEX DRIVE

OPENING THIS WEEK

BRICK LANE

DIRECTED BY SARAH GAVRON
WRITTEN BY ABI MORGAN, LAURA JONES
BASED ON THE BOOK BY MONICA ALI
STARRING TANNISHA CHATTERJEE, SATISH KAUSHIK
★★★★★

MALCOLM AZANIA / malcolm@vnewweekly.com

Two sisters enjoy an idyllic relationship in the Edenic countryside of Bangladesh, until their mother's suicide orphans them and one of the girls, Nazneen, is exported to England into the custody of her arranged-husband, Chanu. She's pretty and young and imprisoned; he's the old, fat oaf prison-keeper who deflowers her, and Anglo-Banglo young Muslim hunk Karim is her crescent-and-star-crossed would-be lover kept from her by the tyranny of tradition. If you watched only the first act of *Brick Lane*, you'd be sure you had its trite stereotypes decoded in moments.

But you'd've been wrong, because this film is deeper than the standees it sets up with the intention of knocking them down—or, more accurately, of granting them each a third dimension in this lushly photographed, engaging tale released to the festival circuit in 2007.

Thirty-something Nazneen and her sister, while separated by thousands of kilometres, maintain an epistolary relationship through which the back-home sister reveals how she careens from one foolish, high-drama relationship to another, as if she were in an American soap or a Bollywood movie. Nazneen, trapped in a romanceless marriage with Chanu, lives vicariously through these letters, secretly reveling in the sordid escapades to engage her own desire for passion. So when Chanu's bumbling egotism and baseless dreaming pitches them and their two daughters into financial peril, the arrival of 20-something "Bengal Tiger" Karim, with its promise of money and May-December illicit love, threatens to explode Nazneen's programmed life into chaos.

It's hard to discuss this film without giving away many of its wonder-filled secrets, but suffice to say the film embodies, without any *ABC After-School Special* condescension, the idea that we should avoid compressing people into our preconceptions of them. Suffice to say Nazneen isn't simply a village girl trapped in the cold, hard Anglo streets of the title, tubby hubby isn't simply the Homeraddin Abu-Simpson his waddling goofishness suggests, and bad boy Karim isn't simply a playa or "fighta." In the inevitable triangle formed by the geometry of fear, loneliness and yearning for love, each character reveals capacities we wouldn't have initially suspected: for guile, for joy, for betrayal, for heroism, for grief, for childlike hurt, for self-reconstruction. Nazneen's mother killed herself because, as Nazneen remembers, the role of women is to endure, and the mother of two couldn't do so; Nazneen, mother of two, confronts her past in her culture-clash present to discover whether she can endure or, perhaps, create a future worth celebrating.

The film's sole weakness is also one of its greatest assets: its combination of cinematography and editing. The pictures are so languidly beautiful that, especially in the opening, they throw one out of the story-telling world, in the same way brilliant-special-effects can shift us from being immersed in the movie's waters to evaluating the superb craftsmanship of the aquarium. Photography and editing collide during the opening and a mid-film major turning point, the latter in which Nazneen collapses beneath the weight of her ecstatic hopes, producing a music-

video-like collage that interrupts, rather than heightens, our emotions.

But if that's the worst I can say about this film, that's high praise. *Brick Lane* trapped me in its remarkable world and among its bold characters long after its last frame flickered on the screen

SEX DRIVE

DIRECTED BY SEAN ANDERS
WRITTEN BY ANDERS, JOHN MORRIS
BASED ON A NOVEL BY ANDY BEHRENS
STARRING JOSH ZUCKERMAN, AMANDA CREW, CLARK DUKE
★★★

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vnewweekly.com

Take *Superbad* and a dose of *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Sex Drive* is what you get. There's nothing particularly fresh about the overdone story of a teenage boy desperate to get laid and seeking help from his friends, only to realize that friendship is what really matters in life. But for whatever reason, this is a formula that is as captivating as stories that revolve around forbidden love affairs and heroic escapades.

Director Sean Anders is no Judd Apatow, but he comes pretty dam close. *Sex Drive* follows Ian Lafferty (Josh Zuckerman), a teenage boy who feels like an anomaly amongst other teenagers because it's almost time to go to college and he hasn't lost his virginity yet. He's secretly enamoured by his best friend Felicia (Amanda Crew) but that's a no-go because she's secretly crushing on his other best friend, Lance (Clark Duke), a smooth-talking ladies' man. Realizing that he probably has zero chance in hell with Felicia, Ian settles for Ms Tasty, a blonde bombshell he's met on the internet and who is more than willing to go "all the way" with him. Ian steals his brother Rex's (James Marsden) Pontiac GTO for the 500-mile trip to see her, taking Lance and Felicia along with him—the former acts like a proud papa while the latter goes along thinking that Ian is on a trip to visit his sick grandma.

While *Sex Drive* is predictable, it has a good share of hilarious moments and manages to portray a glimmer of depth in its generally stock characters. Ian and Felicia are both very likeable characters brought to life by good actors. Lance is the most superficial and annoying out of the trio, but even he has moments where he reveals otherwise. The highlight of the film, however, goes to none other than Seth Green, who plays Ezekiel, a buggy

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SEEDS OF HOPE
FRIDAY at 9PM

LITFEST

Mel Hurtig In Conversation
SATURDAY at 7PM

A History Of Violence
SATURDAY at 9PM

LitFest
Edmonton International Literary Festival

NFB MATINEE SUNDAY at 2PM

FREE ADMISSION!

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Shakespeare On Screen

A Midsummer Night's Dream THURSDAY OCT 16 at 7:00PM

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...former who happens to be...at fixing cars. He plays witty, ...to such a T that the audi-...be scratching their heads along...characters trying to figure out if...ing or being totally serious. ...after all the crazy shenan-...humour, *Sex Drive* turns...a heart warming film; not as...ing as *Superbad*, of course, ...n par from an entertain-...

NOW PLAYING

AN AMERICAN CAROL

STORY BY DAVID ZUCKER
SCREENPLAY BY MARYA SONNLOFF, LEWIS FRIEDMAN
DIRECTED BY JOHN FARLEY, KELSEY GRAMMER, LESLIE

DAVID ZUCKER / jesst@vuwweekly.com

...this for tedious? An opportunistic filmmaker organizing a protest to abolish Independence Day comes to realize that no one actually likes his leftist, anti-American documentaries and opts to make a fiction feature instead. In lieu of any eager funders in the industry, he winds up making a deal with Islamic terrorists who plan to use his fame to access a country music concert for US troops being held in Madison Square Garden. The filmmaker thinks he's getting easy millions in opium profits, but what's really on the table in this Faustian pact is a bucket full of explosives set to blow up plenty of denim, leather and glitter-clad infidels.

But wait, the filmmaker's a chub in a ball cap whose movies have names like *Die You American Pigs!* Sound familiar? The character's name is "Michael Malone." Perhaps this will ring a bell, too. Malone's visited by three ghosts who set him straight on the folly of his activist ways until he learns to love America's Pavlovian response to the call of war. A hint: this stupendously limpid comedy's called *An American Carol*. Let's be kind and call it an homage to Dickens, though the movie's notion of patriotism is certainly less persuasive than Dickens' espousal of Christmas.

It's the product of David Zucker, the exclamation man!, director of *Airplane!*, *Top Secret!* and *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!*. More recently Zucker's showered audiences with the ostensible hilarity of *Scary Movie 3* and *Scary Movie 4*. With *An American Carol*, with the retirement of Leslie Nielsen, who, at a spry 82, sadly shows no signs of exhaustion, appearing here as a redundant grandpa narrator.

You'd think spoofing Michael Moore would be at least a little fruitful, but Kevin Farley offers nothing but mock-jovial blabber, and Malone's titty-grabbing antics don't strike me as much of an apt roast. James Woods shows up for a ... maybe cause he liked the film's ... they had let him rant a little, ...t least be able to stay awake ... Grammer, playing Patton, gives ... his worst performances yet, but ... by far the best thing in the movie ... to show Malone what would ... America lost the war on terror, ... never bothering to explain how one ... a war against an idea. A running ... finds everyone telling Malone that no

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

FILM WEEKLY

FRI/OCTOBER 17 - THU/OCTOBER 23, 2008

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre to confirm.

CHABA THEATRE-JASPER

6024 Connaught Dr. Jasper, 780-852-4749

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri & Sat 7:00 & 9:00; Sun-Thu 8:00

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri & Sat 7:00 & 9:00; Sun-Thu 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

130 Ave 50 St, 780-472-9779

DEATH RACE (14A gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Sat 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 9:55, 12:15; Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 9:55

THE HOUSE BUNNY (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children)
Fri-Sat 2:00, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00, 12:20; Sun-Thu 2:00, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:20, 4:10, 6:50, 9:15, 11:30; Sun-Thu 1:20, 4:10, 6:50, 9:15

PINEAPPLE EXPRESS (18A SUBSTANCE ABUSE)
Fri-Sat 1:25, 4:20, 7:20, 9:50, 12:10; Sun-Thu 1:25, 4:20, 7:20, 9:50

THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR (PG frightening scenes, violence)
Fri-Thu 1:45, 4:25, 6:55

STEP BROTHERS (14A coarse language, not recommended for children, crude content)
Fri-Sat 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40, 12:00; Sun-Thu 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40

MAMA MIA! (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35, 11:55; Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35

HANCOCK (PG crude content, violence, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 2:05, 4:50, 7:30, 10:05

WALL-E (G)
Fri-Sat 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25, 11:40; Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25

WANTED (18A gory scenes, brutal violence)
Fri-Sat 9:45, 12:10; Sun-Thu 9:45

GET SMART (PG violence, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 1:45, 4:35, 7:10, 9:40

KUNG FU PANDA (PG)
Fri-Sat 1:55, 4:50, 7:20, 9:30, 11:45; Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:50, 7:20, 9:30

INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (PG violence, frightening scenes)
Fri-Sat 1:15, 4:05, 6:45, 9:20, 12:05; Sun-Thu 1:15, 4:05, 6:45, 9:20

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:30, 3:20, 6:40, 9:30

MAX PAYNE (14A violence, no passes)
Fri-Thu 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:50, 10:15

W. (not rated)
Fri-Thu 12:45, 3:50, 6:50, 9:40

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Thu 1:40, 4:20, 7:25, 10:00

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children) no passes
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:00, 3:40, 6:30, 9:15; Tue 3:40, 6:30, 9:15

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children) Stars and Strollers Screening, no passes Tue 1:00

CITY OF EMBER (PG)
Fri-Thu 1:20, 7:00

THE EXPRESS (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 3:30, 9:20

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Thu 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 8:10, 10:30

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri-Thu 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Thu 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:50

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:00, 2:20, 4:50, 7:40,

10:05; Tue 4:50, 7:40, 10:05; Stars and Strollers Screening Tue 1:00

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE (PG)
Fri-Thu 1:30, 4:00, 6:45, 9:10

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Thu 1:50, 4:40, 7:30, 10:20

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL (18A coarse language, crude content)
Fri-Tue, Thu 2:00, 4:30, 8:00, 10:25; Wed 2:00, 4:30

BURN AFTER READING (14A violence, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:40, 2:50, 5:10, 7:45, 10:35

FALL HD CONCERT SERIES - FROM THE BASEMENT SERIES 3 (not rated)
WED 7:00

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00; Tue 4:00, 7:00, 10:00; Stars and Strollers Screening Tue 1:00

MAX PAYNE (14A violence) no passes
Fri-Thu 1:30, 4:20, 6:50, 7:40, 9:30, 10:20

W. (not rated)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:40, 4:15, 7:10, 10:10; Tue 4:15, 7:10, 10:10; Stars and Strollers Screening Tue 12:40

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri-Thu 1:15, 4:50, 7:40, 10:10

CITY OF EMBER (PG)
Fri-Thu 12:00, 2:20, 4:30

THE EXPRESS (PG coarse language)
Fri-Tue, Thu 12:30, 3:20, 7:00, 9:50; Wed 12:30, 3:20, 9:50

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Tue 1:10, 3:30, 7:45, 10:00; Wed 1:10, 3:30, 7:50, 10:00; Thu 1:10, 3:30, 7:20,

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, BRUTAL violence)
Fri-Thu 1:15, 4:10, 7:10, 10:20

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Thu 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Wed 1:20, 3:40, 7:20, 9:40; Thu 1:20, 3:40, 9:40

RELIGULOUS (14A coarse language, mature themes)
Fri-Sun, Tue, Thu 1:45, 4:15, 7:30, 9:50; Mon, Wed 1:45, 4:15, 6:40

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE (PG)
Fri-Thu 12:10, 3:40, 6:40

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Thu 1:30, 4:20, 7:30, 10:30

THE DUCHESS (14A)
Fri-Thu 1:20, 3:50, 6:50, 9:30

APPALOOSA (14A)
Fri 12:50, 5:05, 7:50, 10:30; Sat 5:00, 7:50, 10:30; Sun-Thu 12:50, 5:00, 7:50,

BURN AFTER READING (14A violence, coarse language)
Fri-Sun, Tue, Thu 1:45, 4:10, 6:40, 9:20; Mon-Wed 1:45, 4:10, 9:20

THE DARK KNIGHT (PG violence, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children)
Fri-Thu 9:20

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL: DELIRIUM (G)
Sat 1:00

BLEACH: MEMORIES OF NOBODY (PG)
Mon 7:00, 9:45

FALL HD CONCERT SERIES - FROM THE BASEMENT SERIES 3
Wed 6:45, 9:30

CITY CENTRE 6

10209-102 Ave, 780-421-7020

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence), no passes
Fri-Thu 12:45, 3:35, 6:45, 9:35

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri-Thu 12:35, 3:30, 6:50, 9:40

W. (Not Rated)
Fri-Thu 12:35, 3:30, 6:50, 9:40

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes,

coarse language)
Fri-Thu 12:55, 4:00, 6:35, 9:15

THE EXPRESS (PG coarse language)
Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:20, 6:30, 9:10; Mon, Thu 12:30; Tue-Wed 12:30, 6:30

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Sun 1:15, 3:25, 7:15, 9:50; Mon-Thu 3:25, 9:50

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 1:10, 3:50, 6:40, 9:25; Mon 1:10, 3:50, 6:40

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Thu 1:00, 3:10, 7:00, 9:20

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES (PG not rec. for young children, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 1:20, 3:45, 7:10, 9:45

CLAREVIEW 10

2101 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:10, 6:55, 9:35; Sat-Sun 1:30, 4:10, 6:55, 9:35

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:30, 7:05, 9:15; Sat-Sun 1:40, 4:30, 7:05, 9:15

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:35, 6:50, 9:00; Sat-Sun 1:50, 4:35, 6:50, 9:00

AN AMERICAN CAROL (PG crude content, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 9:10

CITY OF EMBER (PG)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:25, 7:00; Sat-Sun 1:10, 4:25, 7:00

THE EXPRESS (PG coarse language)
Fri, Mon-Thu 3:40, 6:30, 9:20; Sat-Sun 12:50, 3:40, 6:30, 9:20

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence) no passes
Fri 3:50, 6:40, 9:25; no passes Sat-Sun 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:25; Mon-Thu 3:50, 6:40, 9:25

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:50, 7:30, 9:45; Sat-Sun 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 9:45

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:00, 6:45, 9:30; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:20, 7:10, 9:40; Sat-Sun 1:45, 4:20, 7:10, 9:40

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Fri, Mon-Thu 4:40, 7:15, 9:50; Sat-Sun 2:00, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language) Real Babies Mon 1:00

DUGGAN CINEMA-CAMROSE

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

MAX PAYNE (14A violence)
Daily 7:15, 9:05; Sat & Sun 2:10

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri-Thu 7:15, 9:15, Sat & Sun 2:15

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri-Thu 7:05, 9:05, Sat & Sun 2:05

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri-Thu 7:20, 9:20; Sat & Sun 2:20

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Thu 7:00, 9:10; Sat & Sun 2:00

GALAXY-SHERWOOD PARK

10209-102 Ave, 780-421-7020

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)
Fri-Sun 3:30, 7:10, 10:10; Mon-Thu 7:10, 10:10

MAX PAYNE (14A violence) no passes
Fri-Sun 1:00; Mon-Thu 7:20, 10:00

W. (not rated)
Fri 4:20, 7:15, 9:40; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:15, 9:40; Mon-Thu 7:15, 9:40

SEX DRIVE (18A crude content, sexual content)
Fri 4:10, 7:30, 10:15; Sat-Sun 1:10, 4:10, 7:30, 10:15; Mon-Thu 7:30, 10:15

CITY OF EMBER (PG)
Fri, Mon-Thu 6:40; Sat-Sun 12:00, 6:40

THE EXPRESS (PG coarse language)
Fri-Sun 3:40, 9:10; Mon-Thu 9:10

QUARANTINE (18A gory scenes)
Fri 4:40, 7:40, 10:20; Sat-Sun 12:10, 4:40, 7:40, 10:20; Mon-Thu 7:40, 10:20

BODY OF LIES (14A coarse language, brutal violence)
Fri 3:50, 6:50, 9:50; Sat-Sun 12:20, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50; Mon-Thu 6:50, 9:50

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Fri 4:15, 7:05, 9:30; Sat-Sun 1:00, 4:15, 7:05, 9:30; Mon-Thu 7:05, 9:30

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Fri 4:00, 7:00, 9:20; Sat-Sun 12:40, 4:00, 7:00, 9:20; Mon-Thu 7:00, 9:20

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Fri 3:45, 6:45, 9:45; Sat-Sun 12:50, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45; Mon-Thu 6:45, 9:45

GARNEAU

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

BRICK LANE (PG coarse language, mature themes)
Nightly 7:00 & 9:10pm (No 9:10 Tue Oct 21); Sat & Sun 2:00

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. John's, 780-455-5555

MAMA MIA!

MAMA MIA! (PG coarse language)
Daily 1:05, 3:05

GHOST TOWN (PG)
Daily 5:05, 7:05, 9:05

IGOR (PG)
Daily 1:30, 3:30

LAKEVIEW TERRACE (14A coarse language)
Daily 5:10, 7:20, 9:25

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (14A coarse language)
Daily 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Daily 1:00, 3:00, 4:50, 6:45, 8:35

EAGLE EYE (14A)
Daily 12:45, 2:55, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20

LEOUC CINEMAS

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

GHOST TOWN (PG coarse language)
Daily 7:05, 9:30

NICK & NORA'S INFINITE PLAYLIST (PG coarse language)
Daily 7:10, 9:35, Sat Mon 1:05, 3:25

EAGLE EYE (14A violence, coarse language)
Daily 7:00, 9:25, Sat-Mon 1:00, 3:30

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (G)
Daily 6:55, 9:20; Sat-Mon 12:55, 3:05

IGOR (PG)
Sat-Mon 1:10, 3:35

METRO CINEMA

11201 136 Ave, 780-722-2222

SHAKESPEARE ON FILM: A ROMAN HISTORY OF ROME
Thu 7:00

REEL FEMME: SHORT FILMS BY SANDI SOMERS & KELLY BEATON
Fri 7:00

REEL FEMME: SEEDS OF HOPE
Sat 7:00

LITFEST: A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE W/ BART BEATY
Sun 7:00

NFB: RIVER OF LIFE (Free)
Sun 7:00

FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

one likes documentaries, but if enough people see *An American Carol*, I'd be a lot more concerned about them never paying money for a comedy again.

CITY OF EMBER

DIRECTED BY GUY KIMLIN

WRITTEN BY CAROLINE THOMPSON, JEANNE DUPRAU

STARRING BILL MURRAY, TIM ROBBINS, SAOIRSE RONAN

★★★

BY NATHAN BUSCH / nathan@vuwweekly.com

Armageddon is the big fear that kids' movies are pushing these days. Mother Earth is the new Bambi's mother that is being killed off, and there's no stoic father to step in. First with *Wall-E*, and now with *City of Ember*, the fears that kids are being introduced to are exponentially grander than those of a few generations ago, and what is that going to do to them psychologically? Then again, art is a reflection of life, and we are dealing with a climate crisis. Maybe kids these days

will work towards fixing that with the same fervour that led me to keep my own mother from being shot down by a hunter or fighting with a Tyrannosaurus Rex all those years.

Anyway, *City of Ember* is to *Wall-E* what the *Land Before Time* was to *Bambi*. It follows a similar path, but *City of Ember* can't compete with the grandeur of the movie about the cutest garbage-collecting robot ever. It's still pretty good though.

Ember is an underground city created after pollution destroys the Earth's surface, a haven for the human race so that they could repopulate the Earth when it was safe to go back up. A box was left containing instructions on how to escape the underground city, but through the years it was lost. Meanwhile, the city itself is falling apart at the seams, having only been designed to last for 200 years, a date rapidly approaching. The two main characters, Lina Mayfleet (Saoirse Ronan) and Doon Harrow (Harry Treadaway) find the box and decipher its meaning. Fighting a corrupt mayor (Bill Murray) and fac-

ing plenty of danger, the two protagonists eventually make their way out of the city before sending word back about the world above Ember.

Adapted from a book, the message in the *City of Ember* is sometimes a little on the nose, as the filmmakers have little time for subtlety—they have to keep kids interested after all. It's too bad, though, that this needed to be a kids' movie at all, as it could have worked better directed at adults with more subtlety, character depth, and less leaps of logic, which it seems the filmmakers believe that kids will just swallow. That said, any movie with a "message" that includes Tim Robbins as a main character is using a heavy hand indeed.

All in all, though, a pretty good movie. The sets looked a little faux, but in a charming type of way. Bill Murray was his normal frowny faced hilarious self, and the action sequences were pretty wild. And, frankly, I think the message that continuing upon such a wasteful path will have disastrous effects on the planet we live on is a better message than one day your mom will die, possibly when you need her most.

THE EXPRESS

DIRECTED BY GARY FLEDER

WRITTEN BY CHARLES LEAVITT

BASED ON THE BOOK BY ROBERT GALLAGHER

STARRING ROB BROWN, DARRIN DEWITT HENSON

★★★★

MALCOLM AZANIA / malcolm@vuwweekly.com

Ernie Davis was the first African-American (AA) college football player to win the Heisman trophy. To me, big whoop: I never cared for sports movies. Which is why I'm so stunned at how much I enjoyed *The Express's* lightning direction, electrifying drum score and vulnerably human performances, which drew me to tears by film's end.

Ernie Davis, played beautifully by Rob Brown (*Finding Forrester*), is an earnest young athlete chased by Syracuse University's scheming football commandant Ben Schwartzwalder (Dennis Quaid), who's just lost star, uppity-n-word Jim Brown to the NFL. Immediately after Davis signs, Schwartzwalder's kindly recruitment face disappears as he verbally abuses his players into the number one team in US

college football. Coach Schwartzwalder knows football, but doesn't care about racial humiliation; any time his three AA players come close to making white folk uncomfortable, he yanks on their chains, reminding more by what he doesn't say than what he does where their place is, and his willingness to maintain it.

The coach may be a man of his times, but these times are changing, as when Davis attends an NAACP meeting urging a national boycott of Woolworth's. When the team heads south, the players face hurled bottles inside the stadium; at a segregated hotel in Dallas, the AA players are forced to sleep in a large broom closet and enter the hotel by the rear door. Davis's arc takes him from yes-sirring eager beaver to challenging White supremacy and his own mentor, wonderfully invoking a time when AA athletes weren't scandal-magnets for betting on dogs, but for being culture warriors during a struggle with police dogs and assassins' bullets. The sports story isn't the core, although it is genuinely exciting and perfectly edited: what matters is how Davis becomes a man.

Far more than Michael Mann's tepid, timid *Ali*, *The Express* engages the pain and humiliation of the African American experience. The film doesn't have the subtlety and detail of Spike Lee's work, or of Norman Jewison's *A Soldier's Story*, but consider that the American screen generally and sports movies in particular usually erase the misery of racial injustice in favour of deceitful "post-racial" illusions, and the success of *The Express* becomes clearer. The film's climax may say little about racial realities, but its portrayal of Davis's post-college career is shockingly powerful.

QUARANTINE

DIRECTED BY JOHN ERICK DOWDLE

WRITTEN BY DREW AND JOHN ERICK DOWDLE

STARRING JENNIFER CARPENTER, JAY RODRIGUEZ

★★★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com

Zombies scare people. Worse yet, their presence as thoughtless walking dead who crave nothing more than eating civilians threaten socio-economic values that we build our identities upon. It's hard to decide whether, faced with an attack of

flesh-eaters, one would bear the survival skills to outlast them or just pass on witnessing the collapse of everything that ever mattered? The evolution of the genre, from George A Romero's sturdy *of the Dead* series to countless low-budget features cluttering up film festivals and the Blockbuster new release wall, has proven that the speedy decay of the body and mind is one of the most effective and entertaining ways to be terrified. *Quarantine*, the latest outbreak of a zombie-like virus, pieces together fabricated "raw" footage, and like *Cloverfield* and *The Blair Witch Project*, the entire film is shot from a camera held by a character within the narrative.

What starts as a documentary segment about Los Angeles firefighters hosted by young brunette reporter Angela (Dexter's Jennifer Carpenter) turns into a fateful visit to an apartment suite of a frantic, foaming-at-the-mouth senior citizen. Following hunky firemen Jake (Jay Hernandez) and George (Jonathan Schaech), Angela and her cameraman witness the old lady take a chunk out of a policeman's neck. After alerting the tenants of the building and pooling them in the lobby, they realize that the building has been locked and surrounded by the military. Only the old lady's "illness" has started to spread (and faster than an ordinary zombie virus), and the stranded group has to quarantine the ones who are already supposedly infected. The only doctor on site happens to be a vet, who nevertheless turns out to be just as effective once the symptoms compare to those of a rabid dog.

The darkened apartment scenes that dominate *Quarantine* are beautifully shot using the awkwardness of digital video to capture the fleeting crisis of a zombie encounter. Their brief contact with the outside world when some well-concealed disease control scientists enter the building has all the tension of John Carpenter's *The Thing*, lit by the misty pink and blue of the outside street. The institutions responsible for containing zombies prove just as threatening, signalling that something really shitty is going on outside. The imagery of *Quarantine* is even intoxicating enough for overthinkers like me to abandon such pretentious analysis and enjoy the movie. ▽

DVDETECTIVE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

virtues of breakfast as a balm for depression—matched by Lupino's aching sense of regeneration, her unspoken recesses of darkness and immensely touching surrender to love. It looks forward in its way to *In a Lonely Place* ('50) in its brooding study of fragile connection between a younger, secretive woman and an older, frighteningly violent man.

BY CURIOUS COINCIDENCE, *Road House* ('48), also newly released on DVD, finds Lupino again coming between a seemingly untamable virile type and a seemingly more civilized, well-heeled associate whose friendship is tainted by compromise. When Midwestern rural roadhouse proprietor Jefty (the late, inimitable Richard Widmark) comes back from his travels with "a new attraction from Chicago" named Lily (Lupino), his intentions are clearly more than professional. But Lily,

the picture of feminine independence, seems utterly disinterested in romance, her response to all of Jefty's increasingly intense come-ons being little more than barely softened brush-offs or some variation of these wonderful little shrugging grunts of hers that are packed with more attitude and nuance than reams of dialogue spoken by most actresses. She remains impenetrable until she suddenly sets her sights on Jefty's manager Pete (Cornell Wilde), and all hell breaks loose.

Watching Lily and Pete's courtship shift from mutual antipathy to desire—he's anal about tidiness while she chain smokes and leaves her butts burning everywhere—is supremely pleasurable, nearly as pleasurable and surprising as Lily's debut as the road house chanteuse. Lupino unceremoniously plunks down at her mini-upright that first night as bowling balls still knocking about in the background. But by the time she starts singing a stark blues number in that low, seductive, gravelly, idiosyncratic voice—has Chan Marshall seen this movie?—there isn't a single person in the

joint who isn't under her spell. The scene is magic, visibly stoking a flame within both Jefty and the much cooler Pete.

The love triangle as originally conceived in the first versions of Edward Chodorov's script—which is discussed in the supplemental documentary—seems to have been the inspiration for the Coens' *Blood Simple* ('84), but the story as it emerges here is at once more conventional and more emotionally pointed building up to a last act that bristles with betrayal, manipulation and Jefty's masochistic, perhaps even suicidal mania. Indeed, Widmark steals the show in the final scenes, but there would be no show to steal without Lupino's singularly beguiling presence charging every scene with wit, passion, conflicted desire and ingenuity. All of these qualities would come to shape Lupino's groundbreaking work as a director: she was one of the first women in Hollywood to bust up the boys. But, as is evidenced in these films, she'd already been rehearsing that job for years. ▽

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Master of creation

Chad VanGaalén soaks us in his fantastic world on *Soft Airplane*

W here is the fucking imagination? The question hangs in the air, indignant and weary. Chad VanGaalén's words stretch over the flood plains of Manitoba and span the rippling dried yellow grasses and immense blue sky of the Prairies, carried back to his home province from somewhere near the centre of our country by the invisible techno-magic world of waves and beams that exists simultaneous to our more mundane one.

It's the mundane he's invoking with such despair, a few days into his Canadian tour for his third (official) full-length release, *Soft Airplane*.

"Those kinds of mushroom-y, tulip bulb-y buildings that you used to see in fantastic pictures of 'the future'—that's the world I want. Stuff that looks like beautiful igloos or quonset huts," VanGaalén sighs. "And why not? Why not tulip bulb-y buildings with veins that blend into the landscape? I want to believe people are better than these sprawls of grey boxes that all look the same."

There's something unspoiled and Capra-esque about VanGaalén. He comes off as a sincere humanist in the most fundamental sense of the term, someone who believes in the possibilities of human experience and consciousness, in our innate awesomeness as a species—that if only we could appeal to our better angels instead of the grey-box-and-reality show-loving reptilian suburban hick on our other shoulder, we'd be able to create something truly magnificent.

VanGaalén himself puts his finger on it quite nicely. "It's like in high school, when you're wandering around questioning things: 'Does anyone have any artistic vision at all?'"

In innumerable other ways, VanGaalén has grown up, but he's never quite shaken loose this innocent outrage, nor abandoned his sense of melancholy and pessimism, patiently drawn out when he feels assaulted by the sheer wrongness of situations and environments. He takes the impersonality of the world, and personally.

"Maybe I'm wrong," he scowls. "Maybe they do want these boxes."

VanGaalén launches into a delightful vaudevillian impersonation of the box-dwelling type: "I want a box! A grey box or a salmon box? I just want a box!"

Switching back to conversational

PREVIEW
FRI, OCT 17 (7 PM)
CHAD VANGAALÉN
WITH LIBRARY VOICES, CLINTON ST JOHN,
MEATDRAW
MCDOUGALL UNITED CHURCH
\$20 FOR WCMA FESTIVAL PASS

mode, he muses, "Canada's pretty young. We were just in Montréal surrounded by beautiful architecture and people. I think of Alberta buildings, and I think about my home in Calgary. I'd like to think it will become solar power central—there's so much sun. All the 'richies' living on the hills could have solar. Or they could stay grey-box. I can see it going in either direction. It's a weird town—there's so much money, they think they can buy culture instead of facilitating it. And we're headed towards a more conservative government, even. It's fucking crazy."

He repeats, "Where is the fucking imagination?" This time it's more of a murmur, like his mind has already wandered off and applied the same words to a different notion.

INFINIHEART WAS A revelation when it was released in Calgary in 2004, introducing VanGaalén's weirdling shambolically psychedelic sci-folk world—unless you had already encountered him busking or playing in a coffee shop or at some house party and given him a couple bucks, whatever you could afford, for one of his handmade and ever-changing CDRs, swaddled in his loosey-goosey handmade artwork.

Local music-maker Ian Russell, who met VanGaalén when they were both Alberta College of Art & Design students, persisted in trying to convince him to discipline his constant songwriting and make a real record, one whose tracklist and artwork wouldn't constantly shift. Somewhere in the process of nailing VanGaalén's particular jello to the wall, the duo became close friends and collaborators, establishing the micro-label Flemish Eye to serve as a vehicle for VanGaalén's music.

And then all heck broke loose: *Infiniheart* slipped the bonds of the Calgary scene and rippled outward, like a particularly massive stone dropped in water. VanGaalén's intense and interlocking visions of love, death and dreaming resonated, as did his aesthetic, fed by his sonic experimentations with his Seuss-esque homemade instruments, analogue-electro mix and quailing voice floating above the aural landscape,



conjuring up emotion and imagery in scenarios that were existential and fantastically imaginative.

The prestige labels came a-calling, and VanGaalén, introspective and perpetually steered by his own private stars, totally freaked out.

"I was pretty paralyzed when it happened," he recalls. "I didn't expect anyone to be hearing it in general. It was hard for me mentally, as weird as that sounds."

He's apologetic, here—VanGaalén's no fool, and he understands he is a lucky man, to be able to create as a kind of "musical intellectual" for a living, but in many respects he's living someone else's dream. He could give two shits about fame, meeting "Important People"—or, horrors of horrors, being treated like one—feels icky and, unless he gets absorbed in the experience of making music, he's even rather awkward on stage.

"Jagjaguar were super nice, too. So was Secretly Canadian. All of them were pretty great, but Sub Pop gave us the most latitude," VanGaalén explains. "They said, 'You don't have any input, whatever you want to do is fine with us.' It was sweet; pretty sweet. And they really wanted to team up with all of us."

Meaning also Russell, who eventually became the musician's full-time "people," doing everything from sometimes lending his crisply powerful drumming and other musical skills to

live shows to overseeing album art and design to taking care of the day-to-day beeswax of the label and shepherding VanGaalén through his hectic schedule, which has lately expanded beyond music to re-absorb his art practice in a series of animations that give his illustrations a vivid moving life and explores the same kind of emotion and imagination-charged synaesthetic wonderlands his songs do.

"He kicks my ass sometimes," VanGaalén chuckles. "To tour, to do interviews, that stuff I would never do otherwise. But Ian makes my life easier for sure."

AFTER A RE-RELEASE of *Infiniheart* through Sub Pop in 2005, *Skelliconnection* appeared in 2006. Although it did well and earned critical nods and a Polaris nomination, VanGaalén seems dissatisfied with it in the wake of the recent release of *Soft Airplane*.

"*Skelliconnection* had songs on it that predated *Infiniheart*, even," he notes. "I was overthinking a lot of stuff. It came off as pretentious, maybe."

VanGaalén confirms *Soft Airplane*'s songs reflect the stability and freedom he's had the past couple years, culminating in the arrival of his daughter with his long-term partner earlier this year. (Russell welcomed his own first-born son shortly afterwards.)

"It's been pretty crazy the past few years, but my creative relationship has been more coherent, I guess. I'm

not as scattered as I used to be," he offers. "This was the first record where I was consciously trying to make an album—a common thread that ties all the songs together maybe, just even feeling like it represented me at one unified time. The others were really collections of songs. This is the first time I haven't been pulling out songs that are eight years old—it's about me now, thinking about stories now."

Soft Airplane is much warmer and sunnier—despite recurring dominant allusions to death and some moments of anxiety and tension—than either of his previous records. Although he brings up the taboo topic of shuffling off the mortal coil in no fewer than four songs, he doesn't yoke it to bereavement and absence, but links it instead to peace, connection to the living and an eternal suspended moment of imagination. "No one knows where we go when we're dead or when we're dreaming," he sings on the elegiac second-last track, giving them a sort of equivalence as the song collapses into the fading clatter of a retreating train.

"Yeah, I'll never achieve the kind of permanence—I'll never go Cobain now," VanGaalén says with a wry laugh as he talks about his young family, crystallized around the gurgling newness of his daughter. "I feel a lot more positive about everything. Still, I'm a pretty paranoid guy, and I still get frustrated easily. That's all there too."

He adds, "It's hard to get behind what I wrote 10 years ago, and to feel like it applies to me now. It's also hard to play that stuff live, so I think it's a good thing to have this album out. I'm still kind of like that, with novelty where half my set is totally new stuff. That's good; it makes me excited to play and makes for a better live show. Performing can feel bad and weird, like when you ate an off burrito, but it can feel good or magical too. And lately, it's been the latter more often."

VanGaalén's also chuffed to be bringing his "drum robot" to assist him in his one-man show here. "It's analogue-based, a prototype. I don't fly with it, but in Edmonton you'll see it. I used it on 'Cries of the Dead.' It's an acoustic drum machine, with robotic arms and MIDI controls." He goes on to describe an ambitious project he's developing, one that will turn a space anywhere into sonic treasure hunt. "I'll be able to play the room!"

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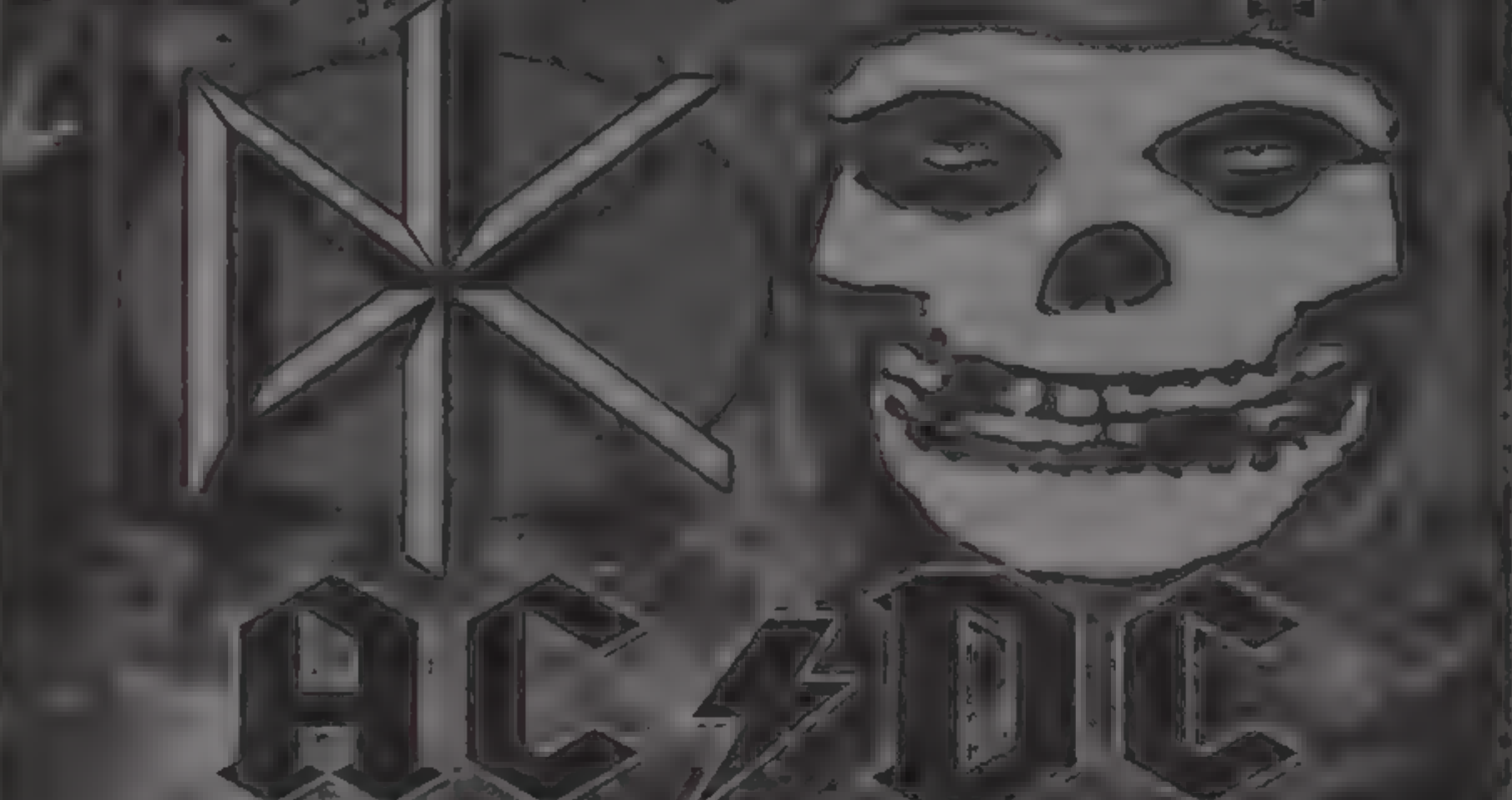
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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
HALLOWEEN NIGHT



THE RAPTORS OF HEADBAND, PASSENGER ACTION, HILLO, TRUE EYES
AND THE SECRET FIRES AS THE AC/DC TRIBUTE

THE RAPTORS OF HEADBAND, PASSENGER ACTION, HILLO, TRUE EYES
AND THE SECRET FIRES AS THE AC/DC TRIBUTE

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THU LIVE MUSIC

BLUE CHAIR CAFE

BLUES ON WHYTE Andrew Jr Boy

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB stage hosted by Alberta Crude 6-10pm

FOUR ROOMS Chris Donnelly

DUSTER'S PUB Thursdays open stage, hosted by the Mary Thomas Band, 9pm

DVB Open mic Thursdays

ECO CAFE Open Mic Nights 1st and 3rd Thu every month, 6:30-8:30pm openmic@deadmansdog.com

FOUR ROOMS Chris Donnelly

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB Lynn Miles

HULBERT'S Stephen Maguire

IVORY CLUB Live Dueling Pianos, no cover, 8pm

JAMMERS PUB

J AND R BAR AND GRILL Open stage with the Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues), 8:30pm-12:30am

LB'S PUB Open jam with Ken Skoreyko 9pm

LIVE WIRE BAR AND GRILL Open Stage Thursdays with Gary Thomas

NEW CITY

ROBIN GIBSON HALL

REX ALL PENCE

STARLITE ROOM

THE WITTING James Murdoch Band

URBAN LOUNGE Sixguns over

WILLY WILSON PUB

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MUSIC WEEKLY

CLASSICAL

GREENBELT COLLECTIVE Winter in the Snow

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR Nights Electro Education dub trip, lounge, electro with DJ Lazer

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapack Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Fridays DJS spin on three levels

BUDDY'S with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ West Coast Baby/Daddy

BUTTY BROSSETT'S Bingo with DJ S W A G

FLUID LOUNGE Girls Night out

FRANKIE MONAGHAN'S Requests with DJ Dam on

GAS PUMP Ladies Nite Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO Thursdays Fo Sho with Allout DJS DJ Degree, Junior Brown

JET NIGHTCLUB SpinCycle Tonight

KAS BAR Mark Stevens, 9pm

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Dish Thursdays funky house/techno with DJ Colin Hargreaves, house/breaks with DJ Krazy K, hardstyle/techno with DJ Decha, tech trance/electro with DJ Savage Garret, no minors, no cover

NEW CITY Electroshock Therapy Dervish Dildozer Naz Nomad in the Suburbs, no minors, 8pm (door), 9pm (bingo hosted by Squirrelly B)

NEW CITY Thursdays Dance lessons at 8pm Salsa DJ to follow

ON THE ROCKS JP Hoe, Portal, Tels Fully Loaded, Starwell, 9pm

PALE MOON LIGHTS Dark Matter, Pale Moon Lights, Boats the Car

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FRI LIVE MUSIC

THE ARTIST Greenbelt Collective, Winter in the Snow

AXIS CAFE Chloe Albert, Andrea House, Hannah Georgas, Colleen Brown

BLUE CHAIR CAFE Jim Findlay Trio

BLUES ON WHYTE Andrew Jr Boy Jones

THE CARROT Geoff Wybenga

CASINO EDMONTON VIP

CASINO YELLOWHEAD Robin Kelly

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

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CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence 8pm

HOLLYWOOD

STARLITE ROOM Greentara, HOMBAL Skavenjah, Soullah Fyah, The Bounce

TEMPLE TGI Fridays: Techno Hippy Crew, 9pm

VELVET UNDERGROUND Mark Davis, Dean Blyan, Junior Bloomsday, Lorne Matheson, 8AM

WILD WEST SALOON Gary Shade

YARBIRD SUITE Billy Bang Quartet

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YARBIRD SUITE Billy Bang Quartet

Mix, 9pm-2am, no cover

PLAY NIGHTCLUB The first of the queer community to open a decade with DJ's Alex B...

RED STAR Movin' on Up Fi indie, rock, funk, soul, DJ Gatto, DJ Mega Watson

ROUGE LOUNGE Solace Fi

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE Deep House, resident DJ Luke Morrison

SPORTSWORLD INLINE AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO Request with a mix of Retro Disco, 7-10 30pm, www.spo.world.ca

STOLLY'S Top 40, 888 how People's DJ

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40, Tysin

TEMPLE TGI Fridays: PsyTrance, Beats and the stuff with the Techno Hippy Crew

WUNDERBAR Fridays with Girls, DJ Avinder and DJ Tonia

Y AFTERHOURS Foundation

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WESTERN CANADIAN MUSIC AWARDS

FOR DETAILS VISIT WWW.MUSICAWARDS.CA

The Western Canadian Music Awards finally hit town this week. While the debate rages over whether or not we should be singling out this band for a little bit of glory, there's no denying that Edmonton's ears are going to be ringing with the sound of award as waves of musicians descend on the city for the many, many seminars taking place. There are simply too many to list them all, so we'll just call your attention to a small selection of the recorded exclusive performances for *Vue Weekly* in the past.

on vueweekly.com



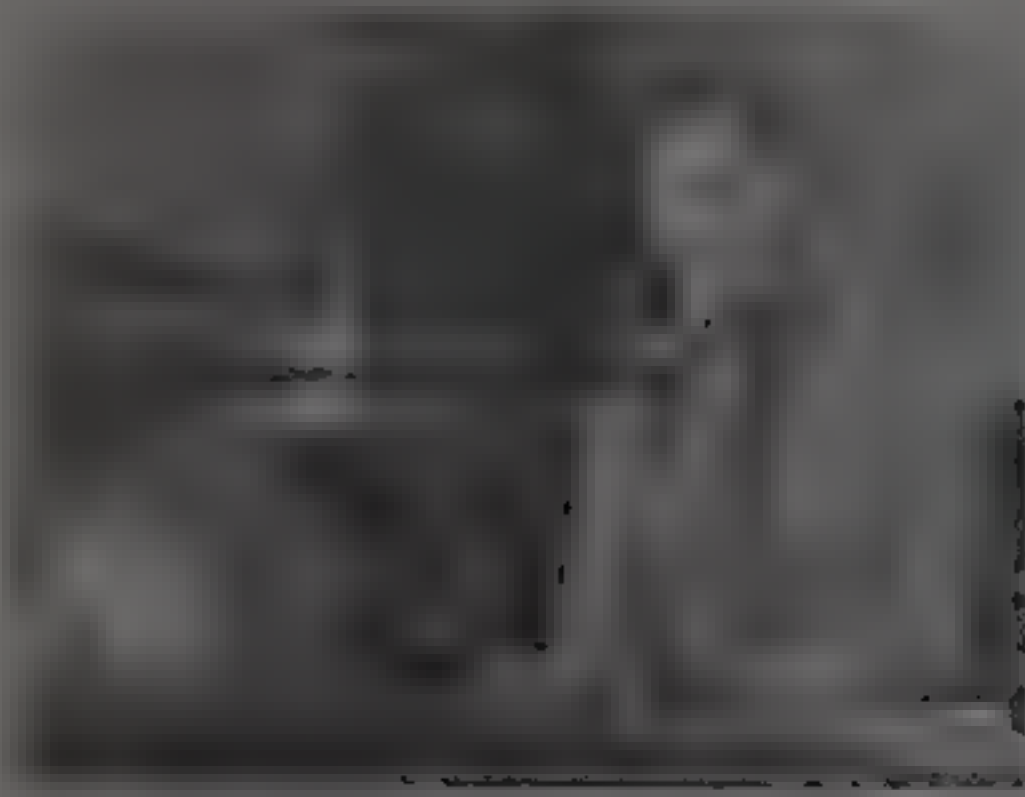
THE PERPETRATORS
SAT, OCT 18 (11 PM), STARLITE ROOM



THE FANNIES
FRI, OCT 17 (11 PM), HALO



AYLA BROOK
SAT, OCT 18 (12 AM), PAWN SHOP



COLLEEN BROWN
FRI, OCT 17 (1 PM), A&S CAFE



RED RAM
FRI, OCT 17 (1 AM), VELVET UNDERGROUND



RED RAM
SAT, OCT 18 (1 AM), VELVET UNDERGROUND

CHATEAU LOUIS JULIAN'S Pub Bar

CHATEAU LOUIS TOUCH OF CLASS GAMING ROOM Lyle Hobbs, 8:30pm

DVB TAVERN Live music every Sat, 9pm-11pm

EARLY STAGE SALOON-STONY Saturday Live Music

EDDIE SHORTS The Ordinars

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Matt Mays & El Torpedo

FESTIVAL PLACE Live music

FILTHY McNASTY'S Open stage 9pm-11pm, 1pm (door), 2-6pm (show)

FOUR ROOMS Will Fraser and the band, 9pm-11pm

FRANK SOCIAL CLUB Live music, 9pm-11pm

HILLTOP PUB Open Stage/Mic, 9pm-11pm

JAMMERS PUB Saturday open, 9pm-11pm, country/rock band 9pm-11pm

KEVIN'S PUB Live music, 9pm-11pm

LYLE AND HYDE PUB Headwind, 9pm-11pm

MADAM THEATRE (LEUC) Live music, 9pm-11pm

ON THE ROCKS Darren Frank, The band, 9pm-11pm

PALACE CASINO (WEM) The band, 9pm-11pm

PAWN SHOP Old Reliable, Ayla Brook, 9pm-11pm

ROCK PUB Molsen Canadian, 9pm-11pm

Freeway Jam: 4pm-2:30am, no cover

STARLITE ROOM Tzadeka, The Joe, Touch & Nato, Rez Official, Politic Live

STRATHERN PUB Open stage 2nd, 9pm-11pm

TEMPLE Oh Snap! with Degree, Cobra Commander and guests, 9pm

URBAN LOUNGE Paramedic, Run the Red Light (formerly Retrograde), The Painted Birds, Team Building, and Raptors

VELVET UNDERGROUND Dan Mangan, Jody Glenham, Jesse Dee, Rich Hope, Red Ram

WILD WEST SALOON Gary Snade

YARDBIRD SUITE Don Thompson Quartet

CLASSICAL

CORNUCOPIA HALL Live music, 9pm-11pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Live music, 9pm-11pm

WINSPEAR CENTRE North meets South, Edmonton Chinese Philharmonic

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Live music, 9pm-11pm

DELUXE BURGER BAR Live music, 9pm-11pm

EMPIRE BALLROOM Live music, 9pm-11pm

ESMERALDA'S Live music, 9pm-11pm

FLUID LOUNGE Live music, 9pm-11pm

FUNKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Live music, 9pm-11pm

ESMERALDA'S Super Parties Every Saturday, 9pm-11pm

FLUID LOUNGE Saturdays Gone Gold Mash-Up with Harman B and DJ Kwake

FUNKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Top tracks rock retro with DJ Kwake

GINGUR SKY Soulout Saturdays

HALO For Those Who Know house every Sat with DJ Junior Brown, Luke Morrison, Nestor Delano, Ari Rhodes

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Sizzle Saturday

NEW CITY LIKMO LOUNGE Saturdays real alternative, classics

NEW CITY SUBURBS Saturday Sucks, electro, industrial, alt and indie rock with DJs Greg Gory and Benji

PLANET INDIGO-JASPER AVENUE Live music, 9pm-11pm

RED STAR Saturdays indie rock, hip hop, and electro with DJ Hot Philly and guests

SPORTSWORLD ROLLERSKATING DISCO Sportsworld Inline and Roller Skating Disco, Top 40 Request with a mix of retro and disco, 1-4:30pm and 7-10:30pm

STOLLS IN WHYTE Live music, 9pm-11pm

SUEDE LOUNGE The Finest Live music, 9pm-11pm

TEMPLE Oh Snap! Every Saturday with Degree and A-lout DJs with Benji

WUNDERBAR Live music, 9pm-11pm

Y AFTERHOURS Release Saturday

SUN LIVE MUSIC

THE ARTERY Shearing Pink

BLUE CHAIR CAFE Shannon Thue Trio

BLUES ON WHYTE Kymara

EDDIE SHORTS Live music, 9pm-11pm

FESTIVAL PLACE Live music, 9pm-11pm

HULBERT'S Sunday Night Mic host ed by Rhea March, 7pm, no cover

LOBBY LOUNGE Live music, 9pm-11pm

ON THE ROCKS Live music, 9pm-11pm

ORLANDO'S Live music, 9pm-11pm

OSCAR'S PUB Open stage Sundays hosted by Chris Winters of Captain

PALACE CASINO (WEM) Live music, 9pm-11pm

RENDEZVOUS PUB October Sky

ROSSDALE COMMUNITY HALL Live music, 9pm-11pm

UNITY CHURCH OF EDMONTON Bob Jahng

CLASSICAL

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Live music, 9pm-11pm

WINSPEAR CENTRE Live music, 9pm-11pm

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Live music, 9pm-11pm

DELUXE BURGER BAR Live music, 9pm-11pm

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Live music, 9pm-11pm

BLUES ON WHYTE Kymara

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Y AFTERHOURS Release Saturday

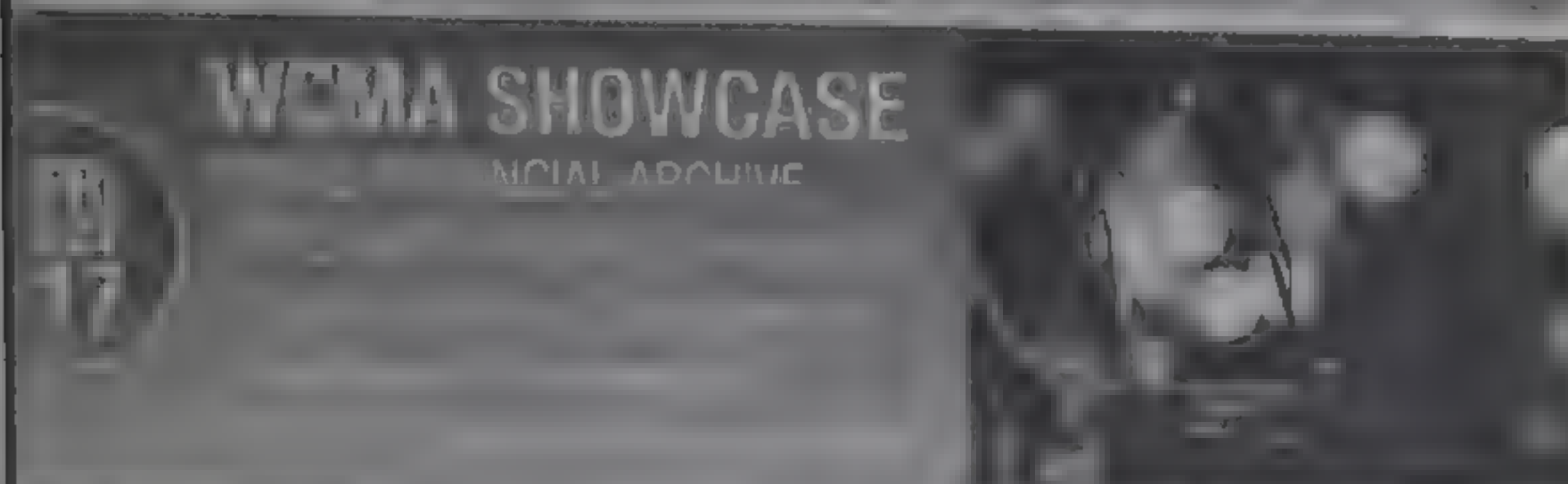
BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Live music, 9pm-11pm

DELUXE BURGER BAR Live music, 9pm-11pm

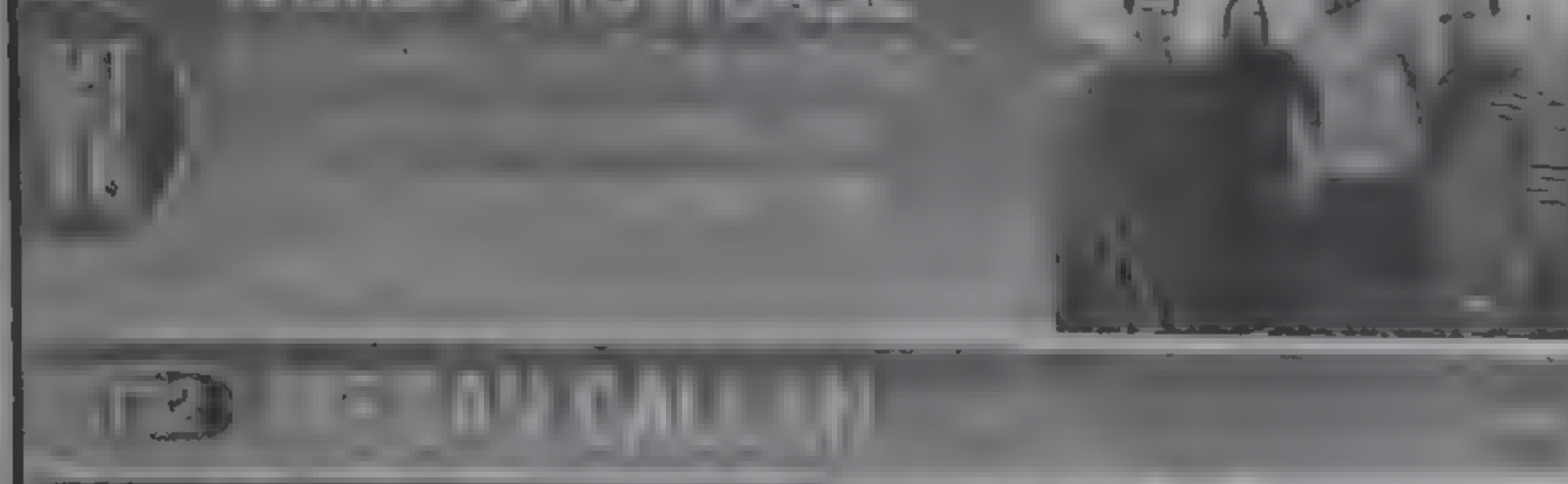
Urban lounge

www.urbanlounge.net

16 WEMA SHOWCASE



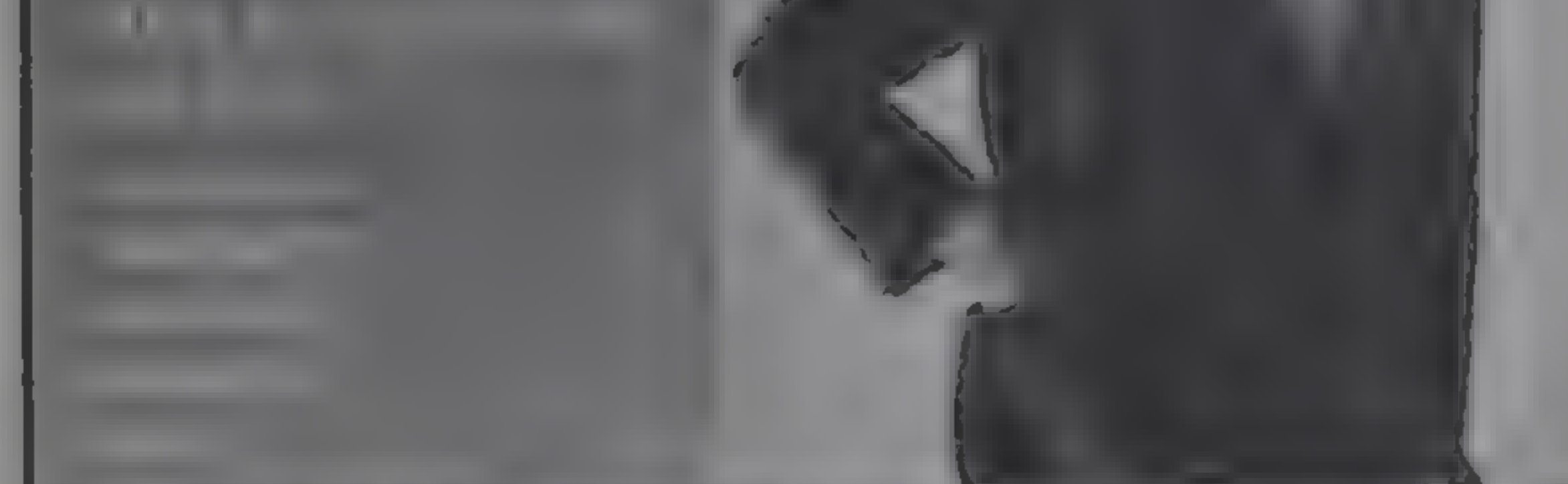
17 WEMA SHOWCASE



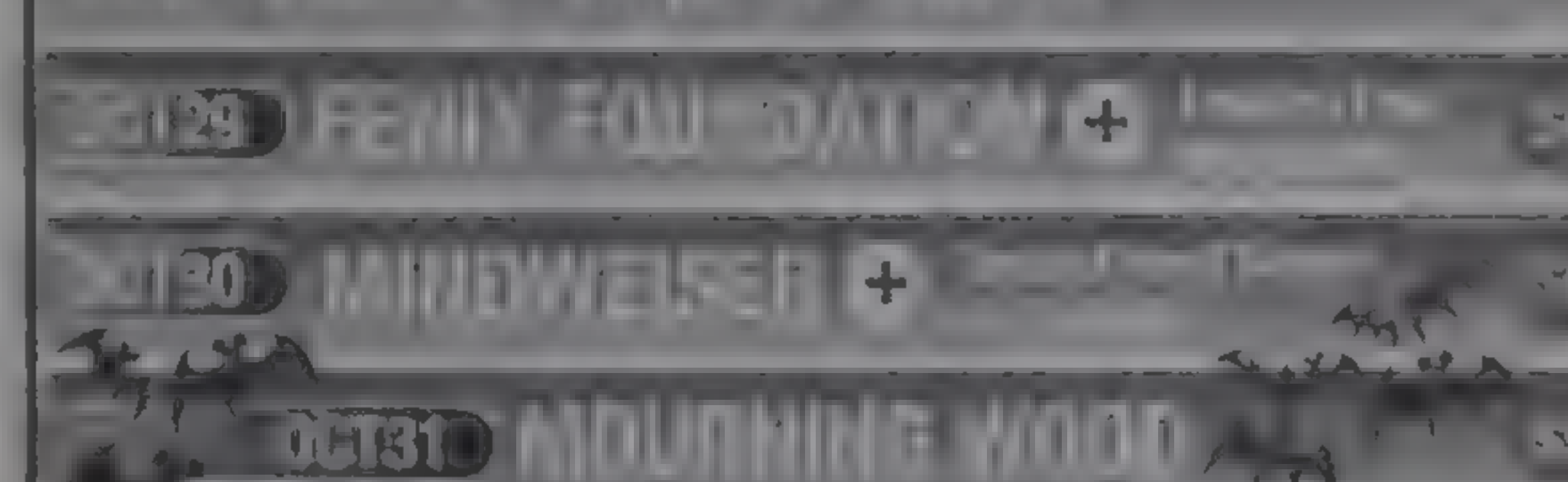
18 WEMA SHOWCASE



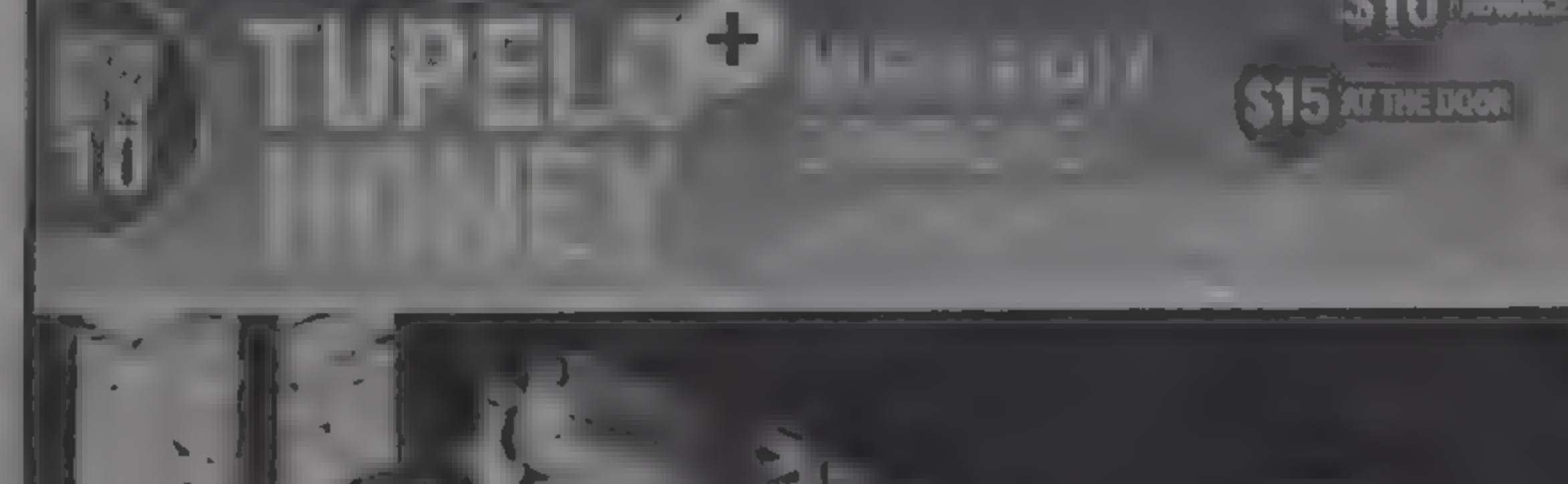
19 WEMA SHOWCASE



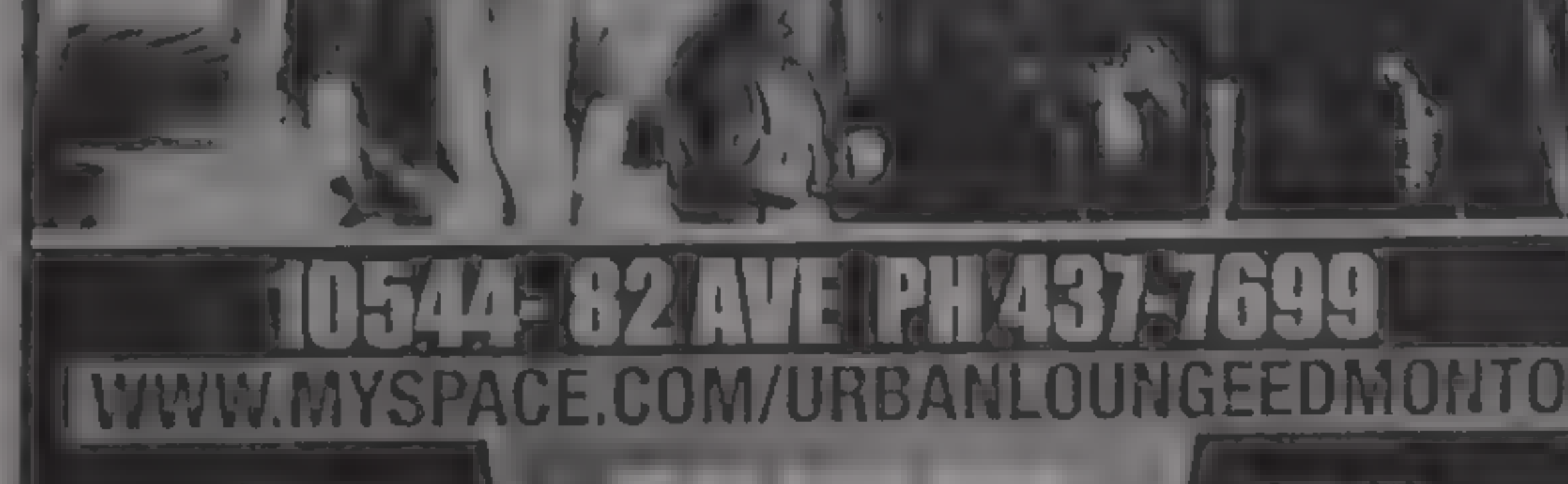
20 WEMA SHOWCASE



21 WEMA SHOWCASE



22 WEMA SHOWCASE



23 WEMA SHOWCASE

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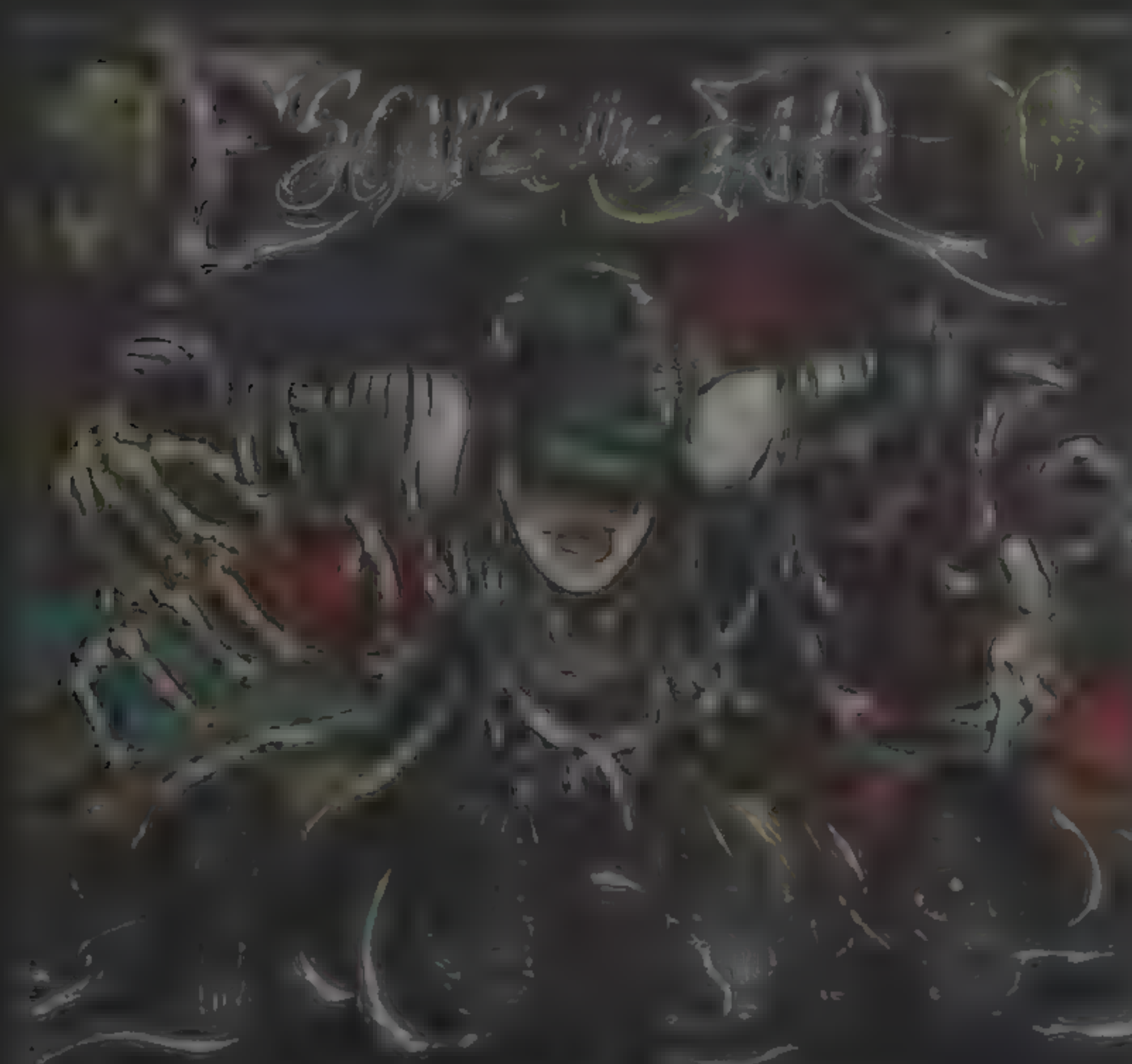
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hmv

PREVIEW
SAT. OCT 18 (9 PM)
ARKELLS
WITH MARY MAAS & EL TORPERO
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE 604

BRYAN SAUNDERS / bryansaunders@vancouverweekly.com
To put it politely, the Arkells is not the most organized band in the world. The first to admit this is keyboardist Dan Griffin.

"Yeah, we're messy," he chuckles, unabashed. "We just like to set up camp, you know?"

Oftentimes, this comes to the dismay of the owners of certain recording studios. Just a few months ago, the band was in Halla Music Studios in Toronto recording its latest album, and if a number of video blogs are of any evidence, the musicians left the place in complete shambles.

"We can't be held responsible for the mess at Halla Music!" Griffin protests, though even he sounds unconvinced.

"It was a combination of us and it was a combination of ... you know, it's a wonderful studio, but it's just a messy place," he explains. "It's kind of the vibe there, it's sort of got a mix-mashed vibe to it—they've got all these amps from all kinds of ages and styles and all these kinds of equipment from all over the place."

The newly recorded album, *Jackson Square*, is named after a well-known landmark in the band's hometown of Hamilton, and the idea of home seems to be an important one for the Arkells. Griffin names artists like the Constantines, Joel Plaskett and Neil Young as just a few of the band's

Canadian influences, and he fondly recalls a performance that the band put on at Canadian Music Week as one of his favourite shows ever.

"To give you an example of how unorganized we are, on the messiness side, we were playing at the Canadian Music Week at the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto," he recalls. "We got a great slot and it was just a totally packed house, totally exciting."

"It's about time for our set," he continues, explaining that the band was setting up on stage when he noticed something amiss with his keyboard. "I'm thinking 'Oh shit, I forgot the power cord!' So, I got my stand, I got my keyboard, I got my amp, but I've got no power!"

After an intense and quiet moment of self-loathing, Griffin explains, relayed the bad news to his bandmates and they all began phoning friends who lived in the area.

"We can't get a hold of anybody, and we're freaking out because we're supposed to be on stage in about two minutes. Then, the sound guy comes out and he's freaking out too!"

"I'm just like, 'Fuck it. You know what? I'll just play guitar. I'll just grab a guitar.' And I play guitar but I've never played guitar in this band, and I don't even know how to play the songs on guitar."

"And, it was probably one of my favourite shows, at the end of the day," he smiles, "because, despite the fact that we were completely messed up and unorganized and totally flying by the seat of our pants, it was one of the most exciting and energetic performances I think we ever gave, and it got an amazing response. ▽"

Adrift on the water

Mark Berube gives voice to the river and the boat on a pair of albums



CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

When Mark Berube released *What the River Gave the Boat* last year, it was difficult to imagine a better vehicle with which to navigate the currents. With the album's recently released companion *What the Boat Gave the River*, however, Berube has taken us right to the other side.

It's a journey Berube has been traveling for several years, and while some people say it's the journey and not the destination, Berube is pleased with where the albums have taken him.

"It was the type of thing where you have this really cool, big idea that you think is fantastic, and then three years

PREVIEW

SAT. OCT 18

MARK BERUBE
& THE PATRIOTIC FEW

BLACKDOG, 3 PM, FREE
THE HYDEAWAY (10209 - 100 AVE), 9 PM,
\$20 FOR WCMA FESTIVAL PASS

later you finally finish it and realize how long it actually took," he explains. "It was a challenge for sure. It was kind of the first time I've done, I guess, two albums, working backwards, where you kind of have the concept where you try to write songs or slot songs in so they kind of fit. It was a very cool experiment to do that sort of thing."

Berube also managed to make some friend's along the way—he now has a band in the Patriotic Few, and is looking forward to a more collaborative relationship. While the songs on this latest album include the talents of the Few—made up of percussionist Patrick Dugas, bassist and melodic player Jesson Moen, cellist Kristina Koropecik and accordion player and pianist Dina Cindric—they were written before the alliance thickened.

"We might have some co-writing opportunities," Berube explains. "They're all fantastic musicians, so I'm really excited to explore that too, because it might go off in a completely different direction."

FANS MAY GASP, hoping that Berube, with the Patriotic Few, doesn't stray too far off this road he's on, but there is one thing that his solo recordings display (not to mention his work with Vancouver's the Fugitives), it's a guy who doesn't mind taking chances.

"The idea of success is that it's sincere, that it's honest and sincere," he says. "Every artist is going to experiment and try different things and some people will like some things and some will hate the other. You don't go into it trying to please people, either."

"I find that a very liberating thing as well—to think, well, I really believe in this now, so I'm going to do it," he adds. "Even if you're pushing buttons talking about uncomfortable things or subjects, as long as you're doing it sincerely, you can go away and go, okay fine, some people like it, some people don't, but I did what I wanted to do." ▽



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OCTOBER 18
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Big Joe gone wild

Punker brings his roots back home

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vancouverweekly.com

Old punks don't die, they just pick up an acoustic guitar and put on a cowboy hat. Especially here out west, punk rockers gone country are starting to turn into a dime a dozen—not that that's a bad thing. Corb Lund did it, Mike McDonald did it and now **Big Joe Burke**—a former Edmontonian and current Vancouverite—will be coming back to the town that stoked his love for music to play some gutsy country songs about drinkin' and hard luck.

For Burke, the move from being a punk rock kid hanging around the Spartan Men's Hall to being a country singer was a logical one. To him, the two types of music share the individualistic attitude that drew him to punk in the first place.

"I think a lot of old punks, when they start to get tired of that 180-beats-per-minute thing, start looking for something that they can identify with and that maintains the sensibility that they've always had. It's not like 'once a punk always a punk,' but I think the people who are punks have a certain mindset that just translates well," he says. "I think there's a lot more in common with that sort of honky-tonk country and punk than people might think."

The move from punk to country may have been a logical one for Burke, but it wasn't a quick one. After leaving Edmonton, Burke played in a number of punk bands in Vancouver before life, as they say, started to get in the way. Having a new family to provide for, having a hard time dealing with the music scene in Vancouver which he found to be less welcoming than the one he'd just left, and having the bassist in the band he was playing in die of an overdose made him throw up his hands and say enough was enough.

PREVIEW

THU, OCT 23 (9 PM)
BIG JOE BURKE
WITH MIKE McDONALD
NEW CITY

"I just said 'This is just stupid,'" Burke recalls. "I sold off everything except one guitar, all my electric guitars, just kept one acoustic guitar. I don't think I picked up my guitar more than a handful of times in the 14 years that followed."

BUT ONCE HIS KIDS got older and didn't want to hang out with their dad anymore, Burke needed something to do with himself and tried out music again. Screwing up the courage and appearing at an open stage, Burke was immediately invited back to be a featured performer. Since then things have been getting better and better for him, culminating in an album called *Love Money* and a western Canadian tour that will see him share a stage with Mike McDonald—a pretty exciting thing, because in his youth Burke spent time roadie-ing for McDonald's band Jr Gone Wild.

"I was a little surprised but I'm happy to hear that—I haven't seen Mike in probably 15 or more years, so it should be pretty interesting. Even though I was roadie-ing for Jr Gone Wild and playing in bands myself, I don't think I ever shared a bill with Mike," says Burke. "Graham Brown [guitarist for Jr Gone Wild] actually got me playing guitar because he insisted I learn how to tune a guitar. I was going to be their roadie, so I diligently went about learning how to tune the guitars and change the strings, and then watching them practice and shows I picked up enough to learn how to put my chords together." ▽

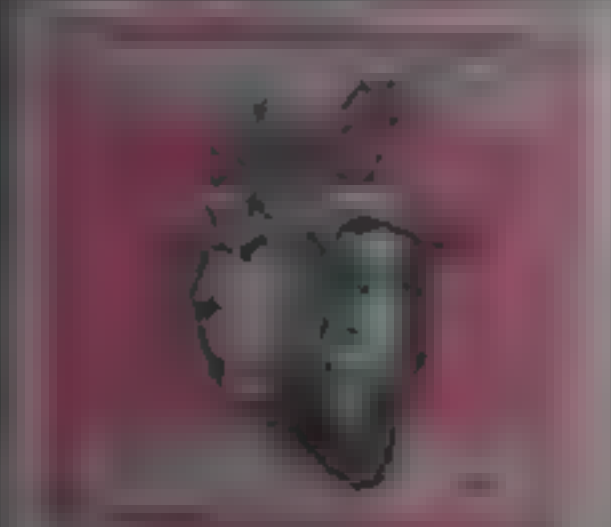
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Behind the mask

Andrea House stays *The Same Inside*

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuweekly.com

With Andrea House's crystal clear vocals and gentle strummings, it's hard to believe that she ever had second thoughts about pursuing music.

Of course, she'd already made a name for herself on the city's theatre stages, with several Sterling nominations and one one win under her belt, and she wasn't a kid anymore.

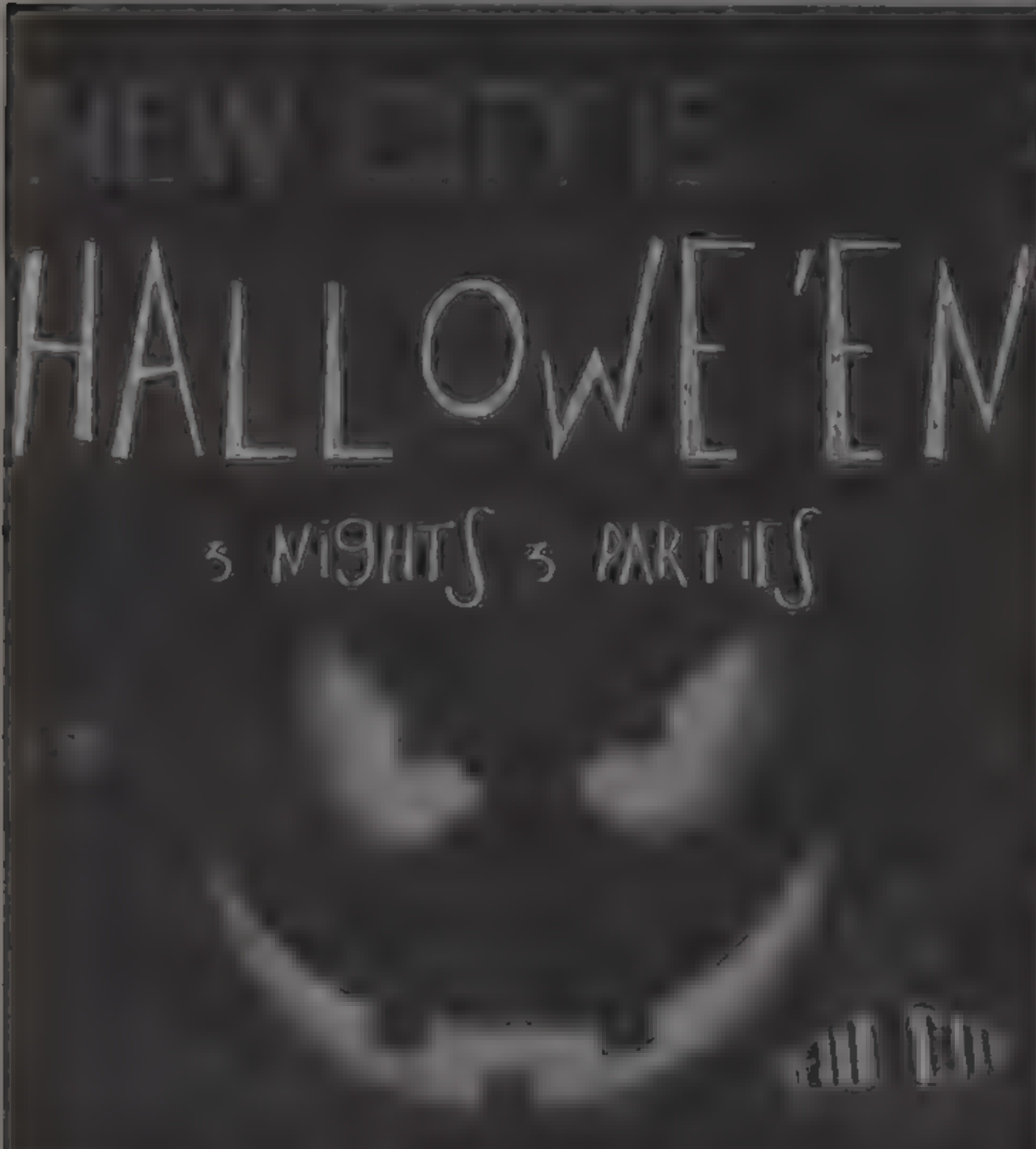
"There is music for every generation. Maybe I'm not going to get hired to play at a punk club, that might not happen," the singer-songwriter laughs. "But starting later I had more life experience to draw from, and I worried in the beginning that you

PREVIEW

FRI, OCT 17 (9 PM)
ANDREA HOUSE
WITH CHLOE ALBERT, HANNAH GEORGAS,
KILLER BROWN
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couldn't start playing music late and there was probably something wrong with that desire, but Terry McDade said to me this very thing: music is for everybody; it's not just for the virtuosos or it's not just for the teenage kids that are 17 playing in a punk band. Music is for everyone and it's

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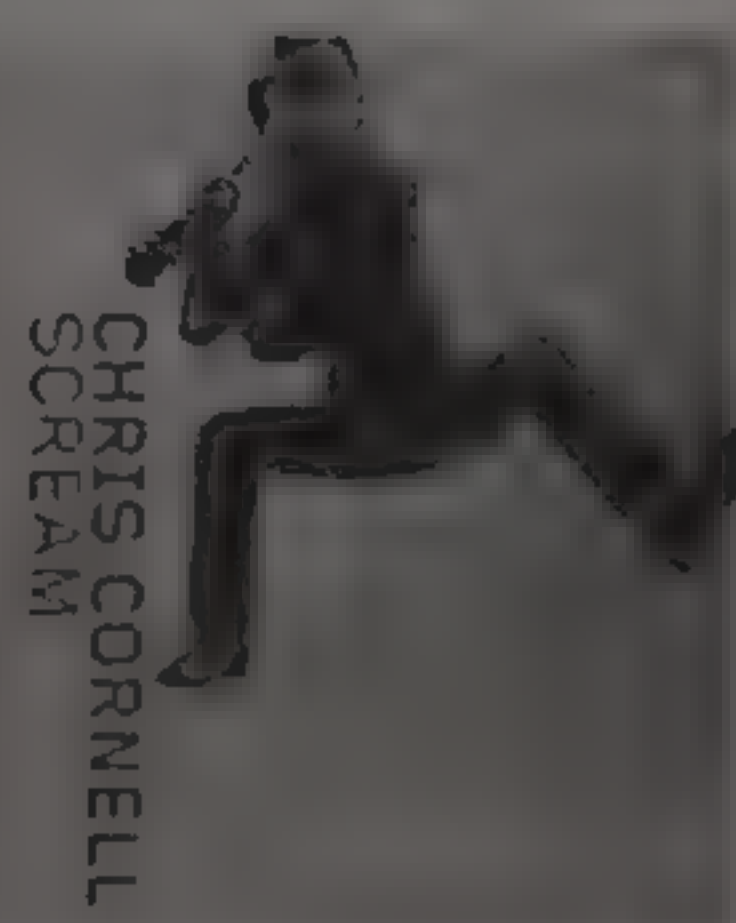


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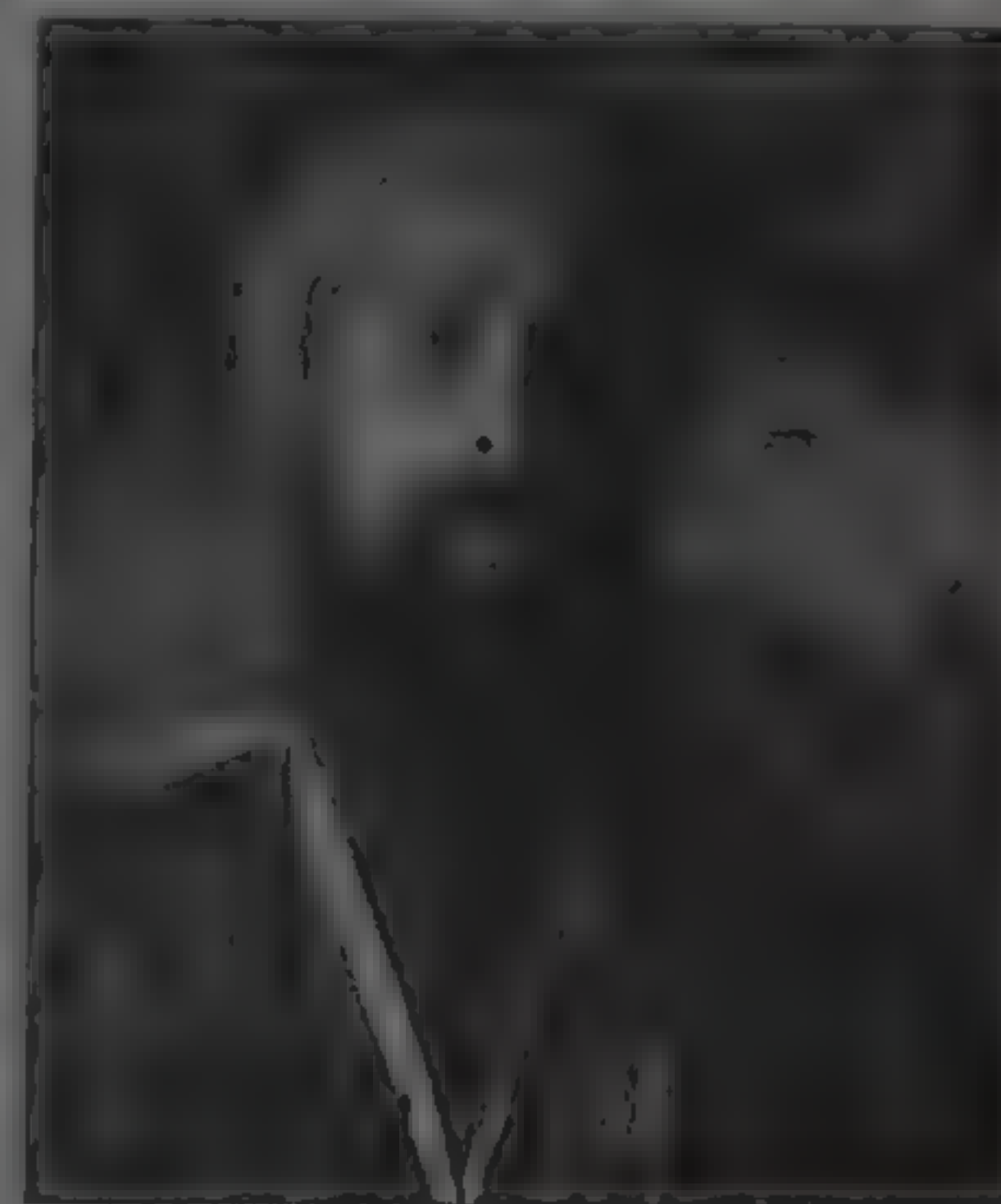
Corvid Lorax unites with *Ninjas in Cities Everywhere*

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

Ninjas and comic books: two of the things that excite nerds everywhere. Self-professed nerd and local hip-hopper Corvid Lorax's new album—entitled *Ninjas in Cities Everywhere*, or *NICE*—is littered with comic book-style art that deals with ninjas, from the front cover where Lorax hides out from pursuing ninjas to the inside where he battles and defeats them.

Originally conceived to include a full comic book that would tie together all of the songs—it didn't work out for the CD release, but may come later—the album contains raps on a wide variety of topics like community, bureaucrats and robots. And although it doesn't exactly contain songs about ninjas, Lorax's fascination with them is palpable.

"Everybody likes ninjas, from my experience. Ninjas are the best thing you can imagine—it's like, 'What do you wanna be when you grow up?' A ninja! Plus the acronym being *NICE*, it just seemed to work out, a little play on words," Lorax explains of the album's thematic artwork. "And then of course with the title it was just like, let's put ninjas in it. What else are you



PREVIEW

FRI, OCT 17 (9 PM)
CORVID LORAX
WITH FIRST AID KIX, MRS MISSILE, LAZARUSH,
PASTEEZ, HOLZKOPF
WUNDERBAR, \$5

going to put in it?"

But *Ninjas in Cities Everywhere* also points to an idea the musician has regarding the types of people there are in the world. Some people you know you can trust and will get along with just upon seeing them, while

others not so much.

"Part of a theory I've had since I was a kid is that everywhere across the world there are people who are predetermined and end up along the same lines and would connect with each other on nearly every level and those people might not know each other and might never meet, but they're members of an organization, figuratively, called *Ninjas in Cities Everywhere*. They're part of the same team, but they're also secret and inconspicuous even to each other," he explains. "It's kind of like that. I find that no matter where I am I run into the right people and get taken care of. It's *Ninjas in Cities Everywhere*!"

THAT SENSE OF community is something Lorax raps about and something that's important to him. Instead of rap put downs, he rhymes about hanging out with friends and shooting the shit.

"I don't like hurting people's feelings. I was picked on a lot as a kid, so I don't like bullies and I have a lot of empathy for kids who get bullied. Unless someone really deserves it, I don't think you should say mean things about them." ▼

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PROGRAMME

Michael Oesterle: Secular Rotations (2007)

1. distance is ignorant of direction
2. scalars and vectors
3. dimensional kinematics
4. the principle of slope

Piotr Grella-Mozejko: o'dY (1984)

Ian Crutchley: The Death and Lives of Pinocchio (2008)
(excerpts from a work-in-progress)

Tara Wells: Cricket dialogues I-V (video)

INTERMISSION

Molva Callahan: To any one (2007)

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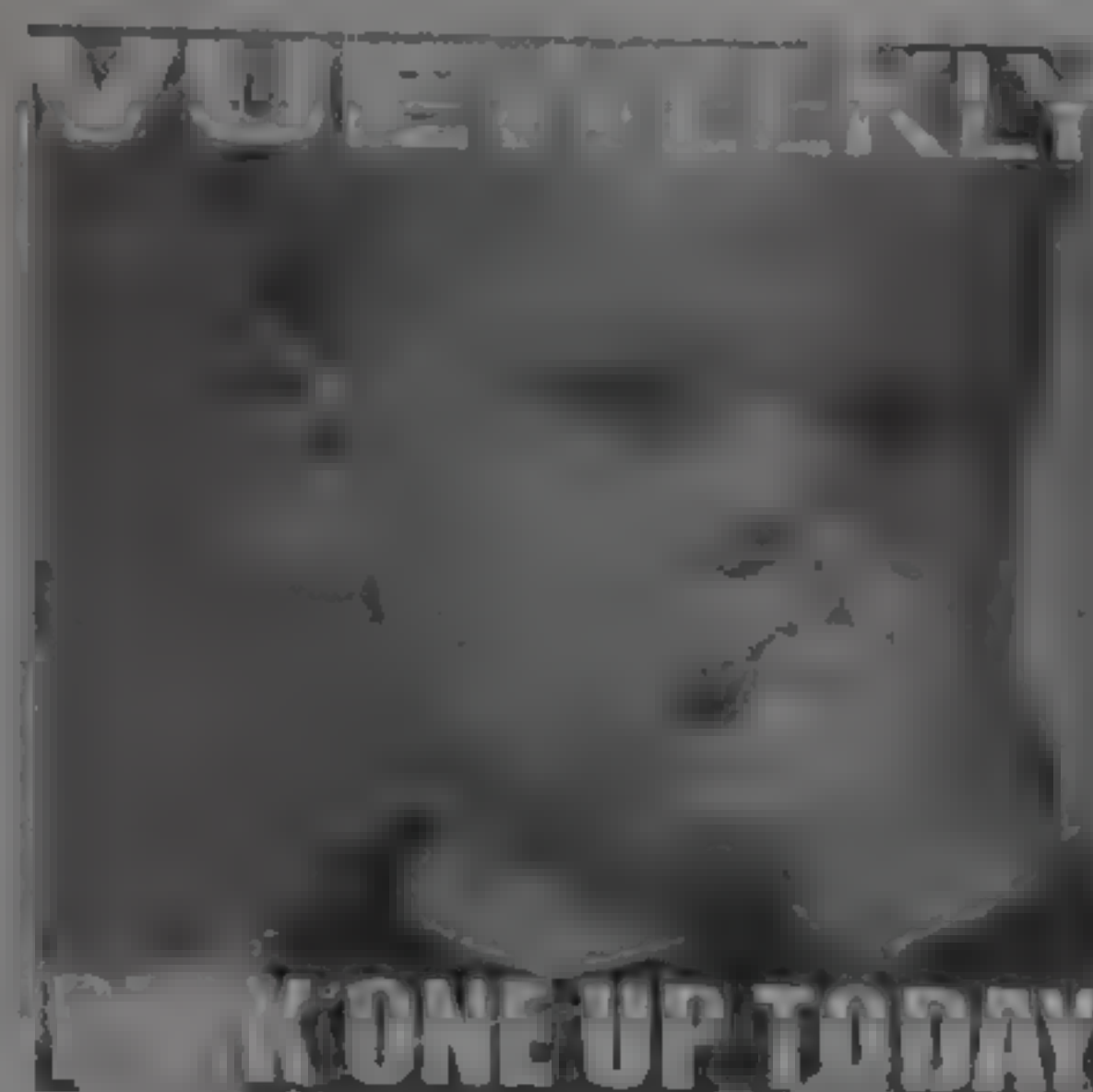
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There's a part of me
that I love it ever but it's
not mine is this so true?
I've been a yearling in her
arms since I came to comfort
her loneliness but there is

These elements, she felt about the variations between taking the stage as an actress and taking it as a musician, but her quest for direct songwriting serves as the perfect

"I have the world of pretend with friends that are actors. All of that world is all about mask work, it's all about putting on something to be able to communicate something. And that mask work, I have access to that and I'm so lucky," she explains. "That's why the songwriting has become so vitally stripped down for me: it's to balance the other half of what I'm allowed to do, which is I'm allowed to pretend." ▼



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Outliers

Vancouver's Buttless Chaps extend the territory on *Cartography*

Over the course of the band's decade-long career, the **Buttless Chaps** have pushed the musical boundaries far past the pop's jokey bandname and origins surveyors of dusky roots with a affinity for taut murder ballads, using progressively more adventurous recordings. *Cartography*, the Chaps' magnificent tenth full-length, departs this time entirely. It's a deeply lunar album, cloaked in lush velvety darkness, touched with the opalescent glow of the crazy full moon. In some ways, it's serene and gloriously eternal; others throb with powerful tidal tracks flicker with moonlit make-out sensuality or are adorned with lupine growls of guitar. The presentation's dense like a folktale. At last, Jesse Gander's recording brings gloss to the stellar creations of the Gowans and his bandmates. Gowan's rich earthy croon has a bit of a packish self-assuredness, and his vocals spaced slightly over the sonic tapestry but intimately in your ear, it lends the whole affair a vaguely haunted feel, as if he were a vintage entertainer who died some tragic narrative but doesn't know he's gone, his disembodied voice singing across the veil. The tightly woven aural-scape embraces a broad history of contemporary music, heightening the odd enchantment, like a radio suspended between several stations, receiving some of each, but bell-clear. It's dark magic; a knot that can be endlessly picked at but never unraveled. "We definitely tried to highlight dif-



PREVIEW **BUTTLESS CHAPS**
SAT, OCT 18 (5 PM)
BLACK DOG, FREE

SAT, OCT 18 (9 PM)
WITH FORD PIER, RAMBLIN AMBASSADORS, AYLA
BROOK, OLD RELIABLE
THE PAWN SHOP, \$20 FOR WCMA FESTIVAL PASS

ferent textures of the songs. Not all over the place, but where it called for it," Gowans relates. "We've been doing this for a while, and while our basic goal on each is to improve on the last one, we decide some kind of thing we want to capture on each. It's not a mission, just something that inspires us. We want to rise to a challenge."

THE CHAPS ALSO wanted to explore what they could create without throwing open the record to a bunch of musical pals. "We usually have a

ton of guests, which is fun, but we wanted this one to focus on the band. It's Dan's first record with us, and he's a textural drummer, so it was good to write with that up front."

Working with textures meant carving out room for one guest—Gander. "We produce ourselves, but we have an open collaboration with engineers. Jesse's creative in mixing albums, so we tried to let him take a role in the band. It's his second record with us, his third with me, so he knows us."

Gowans contends the band also has well-earned self-knowledge. "Ten years ago I didn't know what was going to happen. Now, I know we're not going to be the next buzz band. I just want to play music—write, record, tour once in a while. We're on the same page—when we decided to do this tour, we had to light a lot of matches. There are no dark corners. We know who we are." ▼

composing. One work by local composer Piotr Grella-Mozejko, which Motion Ensemble will perform in Edmonton, exemplifies this approach.

"He doesn't tell you what notes you're supposed to play and when," Miller says. "He doesn't tell you anything about rhythm; any of the traditional notations, indications of how to play: not there. What he has instead are a completely new set of symbols, he has very minimal instructions, and it's up to the performer to kind of come up with his or her own idea of what the piece means and how to proceed with it."

Pushing conventional limits is not new within classical music—Beethoven did that himself—but modern composers have much easier access to a world of influences. For Motion Ensemble, this has resulted in a very diverse repertoire. Along with the music that audiences might consider weird, the group also plays tunes that sound like the soundtracks to horror or action movies. This music does not contain a

specific melody or rhythm; instead, it creates an evocative sound through textures or colours of sound, Miller describes.

The majority of pieces that Motion Ensemble will play in Edmonton were composed specifically for this group (Grella-Mozejko's work and one other are the exceptions).

"That's one of our main mandates," admits Miller. "To keep the art alive by commissioning new works."

Last month, the group celebrated its 10th anniversary by performing a 10-hour outdoor marathon concert in downtown Fredericton.

"One thing that always encourages me is this idea: a lot of people don't really know that this kind of music exists," Miller says, describing some people's reactions to what they heard in downtown Fredericton that day. "Some of them got really psyched, because they just thought 'Man, I've always imagined that there would be music like this, and I never knew where to find it!'" ▼

MOTION ENSEMBLE
OCT 18, 9 PM
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TOBYCH / maria@vancouverweekly.com
He pushes his head against the wall. He blows bubbles. Another... and snaps it against... crawls along the... just another day at the Motion Ensemble, a Canadian musical group. Performing... and experimental... Ensemble pushes the limits. They might consider classical... Andrew Miller, bassist... above, *Variations*... among the weirder... Miller explains, ... to concerts... that Motion Ensemble... experimental, many... beyond traditional

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Lucinda Williams, *Little Honey* (Lost Highway) Does love ruin music? There's a question that has plagued mankind ever since we began singing songs. And, really, the answer to that one often depends on just what it is that you're looking for in your music. If you happen to go in for the schmaltz, then you might just have a soft spot for the sap that so often drips heavily from those generic love songs that find air time at weddings everywhere.

But not everyone wants to whitewash the world around them, even when it comes to relationships. Sometimes, it's more satisfying to take on the pain, address the hurt and work through the depression. That's what the blues has done forever, and country music—the real stuff, not this '80s hair-metal-gone-south affliction that's become a blight upon the world—does a damn fine job of it, too.

So it makes some sense that Lucinda Williams, a woman who has travelled in both the blues and country, and has evolved into something of a rock 'n' roller just as so many other blues and country singers did, has pretty much made a career out of heartbreak. Her gutwrenching songs have drifted from one heartbreak to the next, whether the result of another broken relationship or broken dream or broken friend, and she's always laid herself bare in her lyrics, inviting listeners to share in her pain.

But now, Williams is in love, and the question of just what that will do to her music stands at the fore of her new record, *Little Honey*. Will it suck her creative spirit out as she ignores those open sores she never shield

from in the past in favour of taking it easy on her new love?

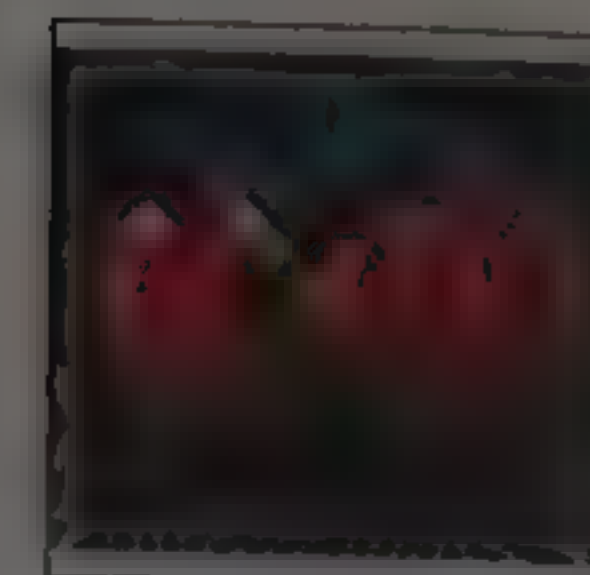
Well, no. No, she won't—at least not musically. In fact, the new album finds Williams shying away from the introspection of her last release, *West*, and careening along through the songs desperately. *Little Honey* is far less about atmosphere than *West* was. This time, she returns to the raunchy bar-band glory of 2003's *World Without Tears*. It's a nice fit for Williams, who uses her band, Buick 6, to excellent effect, letting the players crash and nearly burn and put out the fires and

then stoke the flames again—"Little Rock Star" features a sonic tornado for a breakdown, while "Heaven Blues" groans and growls in welcome fashion.

Lyrical, sure, Williams professes her love, but she also admits to being intrigued by the flaws as well ("Real Love," where she makes the awkward line "The thing about you so far, you squeeze my peaches / Then you send me postcards of girls on beaches," work); she also doesn't restrain herself to the upside of love, touching on the fragile nature of the game in "If Wishes Were Horses."

For most of its distance, *Little Honey* is an album that lets Williams sit back and enjoy the moment, rolling with the band. It's at the very end of the record that she goes beyond that comfort, though, on a cover of AC/DC's "It's a Long Way to the Top (If You Wanna Rock 'n' Roll)." It's on this slow, soulful take that she truly opens herself up, sounding every bit like she knows that for a fact after decades of climbing. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

AC/DC, *Black Ice* (Sony BMG) even with an eight-year gap between releases, it sounds like AC/DC



really want anything different. At this point, AC/DC has become a dependable rock 'n' roll

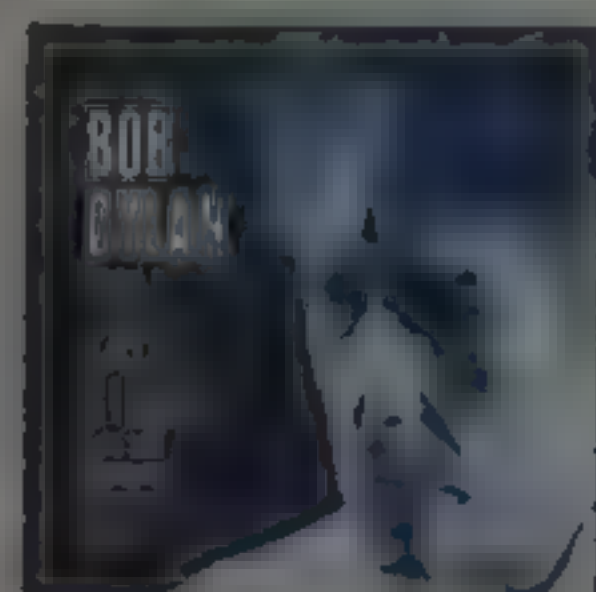
we'll get to in just a second. Here are as good as anything it has put out since Bryan Adams replaced the late Bon Scott. With Malcolm Young, the band's foundation solid while brother Angus up and down the neck for his which there are plenty. If one can't springs to mind, though, it's the chance of "rock 'n' roll" in the three of the songs here (plus one "rocking"). I mean, eight years... band couldn't come up with more variation? Dependable. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Celtic Thunder, *Act Two* (Decca) Celtic Thunder shows us the scourge of boy bands has



beyond America. It contains all the staples of a typical boy band CD: disingenuous melodrama, over-the-top and melodies and vocal crescendos. Even the most diehard Celine Dion might find tedious. Not surprisingly, *Act Two* contains a cover of "I Wanna Know What Love Is," a classic and the repertoire of cheesy, 1980s power ballads. What separates Celtic Thunder from North American boy bands is where the group's strength lies, is in the integration of traditional Celtic musical elements and folk songs. "Raggle Gypsy" and "Love Thee Dearest" are the best tracks on the album, with the latter taking an operatic turn; this piece presents a sincerely subtle vocal expression, and lays off the cheese. And surprise! It works. —MARIA KOTOVYCH / maria@vuwweekly.com

Bob Dylan, *Tell Tale Signs: Rare and Unreleased, 1989 - 2006* (Columbia) Volume eight in Bob Dylan's bootleg



series is a two-disc set—unless you track down the limited three-disc one—that culls a wide selection of treasures from the last couple of

decades. It's a time that found Dylan finding himself again as a songwriter and performer, and re-inventing himself as a bluesman, his voice taking on a old and worn grizzled quality over top of its characteristic nasalness. With any sort of compilation, the danger is that the tracks will come off as interesting diversions, but that they won't work together as a whole. With this one though, care was taken with the arrangement of the material, so there's a sense of excitement as each track carries along into the next. Ultimately though, with two (or three) discs worth of material, this is really an album designed for Dylan fans, and it's an excellent one at that. —EDEN MUNRO

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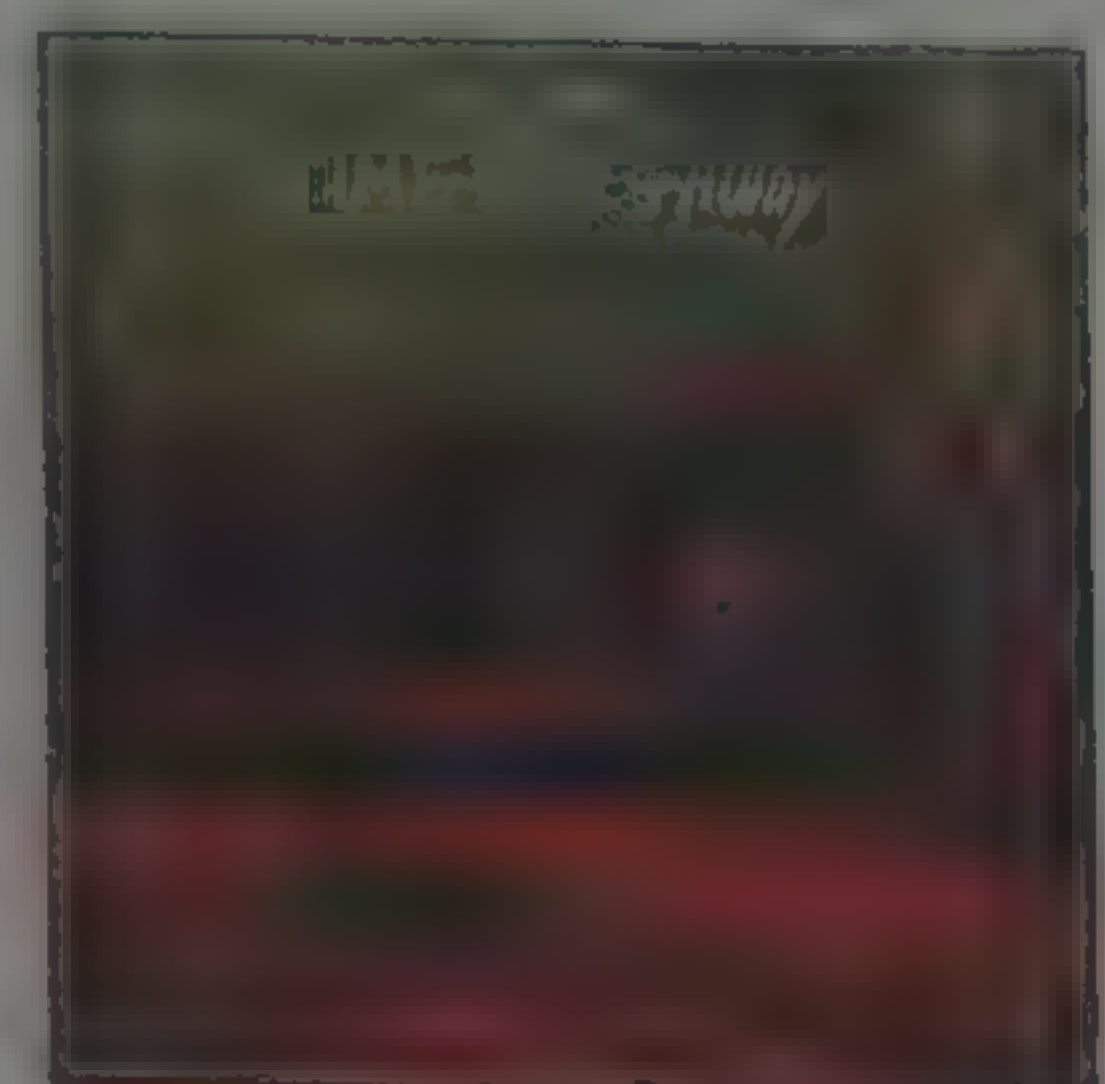
Lioness (New Romantic)
 The sound of 3 a.m. It's that
 late night when you have to
 make a decision to
 give up the
 evening, admit
 defeat and go
 home or keep
 going until your
 legs fall from
 under you and you
 cannot dance for a sin-
 gle step. Pulsing bass,
 a steady drum and a synth sound
 that hits your brain like a
 lobotomy, the pulsing of it
 gets your feet to move. And then,
 singing vocals from Vanessa Fischer
 come overtop, sounding like an old
 man blasting from the bottom of a
 well and I mean that in a good way—
 your night is complete. One impor-
 tant thing, though: be sure to leave
 your gin and Gatorade on your bedside
 table. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

Reatard, Matador Singles '08
 (Matador) One of the best things
 about Jay Reatard's two recent paeans
 to the old ways of
 record releasing—
 that is, release sin-
 gles and then
 collect all of the
 individual pieces
 together—is the
 opportunity to
 watch him grow and shift his sound
 incrementally: it's a voyeuristic look
 into the process of rocking the fuck out.
 From his first single in 2006, "Night of
 Broken Glass," with its punk screams
 and razor guitars, to the almost-glow-
 ing '60s pop of "I'm Watching You,"
 which closes the '08 version, Reatard
 is slowly been moving from punk to
 single-pop, without ever losing his
 edge. Watching the process wouldn't be half
 as interesting if Reatard wasn't as tal-
 ented as he is: the man's songs always
 have a sharp forward momentum, and
 his lyrics run from straight-ahead
 sung dissatisfaction to layered takes
 on lost love. It's great stuff, however it's
 released. —DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

For Fucking Hipsters, Until We're
Dead (Fat Wreck Chords) Maybe
 you're getting old and cynical, but this
 punk-pop record isn't
 shit is getting a lit-
 tle harder to write
 pretty easy for an
 American band to
 criticise its gov-
 ernment and cor-
 porate structure.
 It's opportunistic, it lacks guts and
 you're not telling me anything new or
 interesting. Oh, you think that corpo-
 rate boardrooms don't care about the
 common man? Oh, you think that
 business interests getting in bed with
 politicians somehow cheapens the
 democratic process and causes it to
 be a little suspect? How interesting—
 you are totally progressive. I especial-
 ly liked the part where you compared
 what's happening to dissenters in
 America right now to what happened
 to the victims of the holocaust. In no
 way did I think that sentiment cheap-
 ened your argument or misrepresented
 an actual travesty for your own
 creative agenda. —BRYAN BIRTLES /
 bryan@vueweekly.com

MUSIC | OLD SOUNDS

Neil Young, Time Fades Away
 (Reprise) Originally released: 1973
 Over the years, Neil Young has driven
 his career without
 regard for hit songs
 and a steady
 upward climb into
 stadium rock. There
 have been hard
 right turns, rever-
 sals and just plain
 bizarre twists over
 the decades since
 he left his Canadian
 home and moved to
 the United States



Time Fades Away
 is one of those records that confounded
 Young's fans—or at least many of
 those who had recently latched onto the
 easy melodies and relative comforts of
 1972's big-selling *Harvest*
 Rather than continue in the direc-
 tion of his previous studio album,
 Young hit the road with the Stray
 Gators backing him and recorded a
 live album of new material, capturing
 songs and performances that were
 ragged and tortured, to say the least,
 and coloured in no small part by the
 recent heroin overdose of Young's
 friend and guitarist Danny Whitten
 Precision was often jettisoned in
 favour of raw emotion during the live
 performances that this album was
 culled from, with Young opening with
 the title track's frenzied cry, "Down on
 pain street, disappointment lurks,"
 and closing with the grungy noise of
 "Last Dance," where he sings "You
 can live your own life" at the same
 time as he situates the song within

the circular grind of the work week
 As much as *Time Fades Away* is
 marked by the rawness of the full band
 performances, however, it is the trio of
 songs that Young performs on solo
 piano, his voice cracking painfully during
 each one, that ties the record together,
 softening the steel heart of determina-
 tion that Young
 turns to in the face
 of devastation in
 several of the
 tunes.
 "Journey Thru
 the Past" finds the
 singer questioning
 his direction, con-
 trasting his adopted
 home with the one
 back in Canada, as
 he asks, "Will I still
 be in your eyes and
 on your mind?"; "Love in Mind," the one
 track drawn from an earlier tour than
 the rest, sees Young admitting, "I've got
 nothing to lose I can't get back again";
 and on "The Birdge" he sings sadly,
 "The bridge was falling down / And that
 took a lot of lies."
 It's the simple admissions, trembling
 voice accompanied only by sad piano
 chords, that reminds us that Young is a
 damaged performer often at his most
 interesting when he's struggling to hold
 his head above the water
 Young has said that *Harvest* put him
 in the middle of the road, after which
 he immediately headed for the ditch
 and *Time Fades Away* was the first
 movement in that direction, followed
 by 1974's *On the Beach* and 1975's
Tonight's the Night, those three albums
 form a trilogy of sorts within Young's
 catalogue, finding the songwriter set-
 tling firmly into that ditch, not afraid to
 get stuck in the mud or to splash a little
 (or a lot) of dirt on his songs. ▽

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WARNER
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 Sandpaper diaper
- ELISA**
DANCING
SUGAR
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 Make "feelings" album
- SOLANGE**
SOL-ANGEL AND THE HADLEY ST
DREAMS
REFFIN
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 As in Beyonce's sister
 As in Latoya
- SEX WITH STRANGERS**
THE MODERN SEDUCTION
BOUTIQUE EMPIRE
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 But with less shame and almost
 No rectal chafing

- TICKLE ME PINK**
MADLINE
WIND-UP
 A simple game plan
 Write good songs and play them well
 Check and fucking check
- TERENCE HOWARD**
SHINE THROUGH IT
SONY BMG
 Serious actor
 Serious adult contemp
 Serious nap time
- DASIS**
DIG OUT YOUR SOUL
REPRISE
 It's nice to see that
 Noel's raging Beatles boner
 Is still flyin' high
- GYM CLASS HEROES**
THE GUILT
FUELED BY RAMEN
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 And minimal suck
- AARON PRITCHETT**
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ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

"Sometimes the fastest way to get there / is to go slow," sings Tina Dico in her song "Count to Ten." "Sometimes if you want to hold on / you've got to let go." That's a ripe oracle for you to meditate on, Aries. As you explore the nuances of its meaning, you may discover secrets about how life is always working behind the scenes to balance things out. You might also see that going to any extreme will often attract the opposite extreme into your life; an excess of yang can lead to yin, and vice versa.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

I usually don't have to tell you Bulls how important it is to finish what you've started. You are, after all, among the top three signs of the zodiac when it comes to following through. But just in case you've momentarily fallen under the sway of a delusion that would encourage you to escape before the resolution is fully in place, I'm here to remind you: it's time to make the art of completion your graceful obsession.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

Who are the best enemies we have ever had? According to David Brown in the *Washington Post*, they are the thousands of endogenous retroviruses that attacked our ancestors for millions of years. In response to their evil invasions, we humans have had to build our rough, tough immune system, which is one of the most amazing creations on the planet.

Let's make this your inspirational metaphor for the coming weeks, Gemini. I urge you to welcome the opportunities that your adversaries are going to give you to grow bigger, stronger and more beautiful.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

Sometimes it makes sense for you to be conservative and cautious and skeptical of novelty. A periodic immersion in the slow-motion approach helps you maintain a strong center of gravity and allows you to be true to yourself in the face of the pressure you get to be like everyone else. The past few weeks have been such a time for you, Cancerian. Soon, though, you'll begin to feel urges to take some risks, instigate fresh trends and express yourself with more daring and expansiveness. Are you game?

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

Futurists predict that in 30 years many of us will have robots as our best friends. But I believe it's already the case that machines are our boon companions. You may not have a name for your computer or iPhone, but you interact with it as if it were an animate and intimate assistant. Music or TV or talk radio might be turned on in your home around the clock, providing a constant flow of comforting noise. I know people who derive a sense of coziness from the hum of the refrigerator or the rumble blowing through the heating vents. Have you ever talked to your car? Kicked a temperamental appliance? Used a sex toy? This is the best week ever for you to acknowledge your symbiosis with the alien life forms we depend on. Now go kiss your laptop. Caress your toaster.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

"If you could ask everyone you met one question, what would it be?" A reader named Ty Sassaman emailed me with that query. As I thought about what my response would be, I considered questions like "What's the one thing you most want to accomplish before you die many years from now?" or "What could you do to bring more intelligence into the way you love?" But ultimately I decided on "What is your soul's code?" How about you, Virgo? What would be your prime question? I suggest that in the coming days you ask it of everyone you encounter. You're in a phase in your astrological cycle when focused curiosity is a kind of superpower.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Describing the poet Kenneth Koch, his colleague John Ashbery said that his work "gives you the impression that you are leading an interesting life; going to parties and meeting interesting people, falling in love, going for rides in the country and to public swimming pools, eating in the best restaurants and going to movies and the theater in the afternoons. By comparison, most other modern poetry makes me feel as if I were living in a small Midwestern university town." In the coming weeks, Libra, I exhort you to have an impact on people that's like Koch's poetry. Here's the best way to do that: live the most interesting and imaginative life you can dream up.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

If you're a left-winger, you may think right-wingers are stupid or evil or both. If you're a right-winger, you probably hold the same attitudes about left-wingers. A similar pattern prevails between most other groups

that hold opposing views. You're a rare person if you've never looked at a certain group of people and thought to yourself, "They are all sick idiots." But in the coming week, Scorpio, I'm asking you to find out what it's like to dispense with judgments like that. In fact, try living without any scapegoats whatsoever. If even for an hour per day, visualize the possibility that those with whom you disagree might be sincere and well-meaning. I'm not suggesting this exercise merely because it's a nice thing to do. It will also have the magical effect of giving you access to parts of your own intelligence that have been closed off to you.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

"Be humble for you are made of dung," says a Serbian proverb. "Be noble for you are made of stars." I expect that you'll soon be getting vivid evidence of that truth, Sagittarius. Your challenge will be to resist the temptation to believe that you're more dung than stars, or more stars than dung. That might be hard, given the fact that practically everyone around you believes they are one or the other. But I promise you that you have the power to do it. You can exude cheerful equanimity while dwelling right at the crux of the paradox.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

Describing a Jupiter transit, Capricorn astrologer Steven Forrest wrote, "Life is a train wreck, except the trains are made of cake and ice cream." Amen to that, bro. I'd add that a Jupiter transit might also be imagined as being on the verge of too many orgasms, or getting forced to make a painful choice between fantastic wealth and amazing power, or having well-meaning allies overwhelm you with help. Now,

as you enter the last 12 weeks of Jupiter's year-long journey through your astrological house of beginnings, I'm expecting you to harvest some of the most delightful and enriching "messes" ever

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

In a recent horoscope, I urged people to convince everyone around them to take more responsibility and be more accountable. In response, a reader named Rene wrote, "I can't think of *anything* more futile! Convincing other people to be anything other than the way they are is a misguided and losing proposition. Unless people have hired you as their therapist, or adopted you as their guru, they are not likely to take your opinions about their behavior seriously." Rene did acknowledge that it's possible to subtly inspire people by being a stirring example of the behavior you'd like to see in them. Since I think her observations are not only wise but also pertinent to your current situation, I'm passing them on to you

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

In medieval Europe, more resources and human ingenuity were lavished upon cathedrals and churches than on any other buildings. In the last hundred years, the emphasis has been different, having switched to the towering structures that house institutions dedicated to commerce. By that measure, money is a far more important god than God. During the next few weeks, Pisces, I invite you to buck the modern trend. As an experiment, see if you can devote at least one more percent of your energy and intelligence to matters of the spirit and soul than to the demands of the material realm. I suspect you'll find, ironically, that this will lead to an increase of your mastery over the material realm. W

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Shades of gay

GBT | QUEERMONTON

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Living in a visual age where gay is seen by many as the white man or western man's sickness and is typified by white, physically fit people being outed by Perez Hilton and bamboozling themselves on TV and in the movies doesn't leave a lot of room for a butch/fem (depending on her mood) lady lover who wants to dance at the gay bar while not having to sacrifice a healthy open relationship with her mother.

Aisha, who prefers not to use her last name out of respect for her family, describes not only having to carve out a place that allows her room to express all parts of herself, but also relays the pressure she feels from her family to conform, be respectful and not erode the traditions they have fought so hard to keep up in a country that would just as soon see them assimilated. It is an experience of being squeezed on all fronts, not to mention from within.

Part of the pressure comes from the narrow way society views sexuality. "We still talk about being gay in a North American way," Aisha says, and she's right. This year at the International AIDS conference in Mexico City Shivanand Khan, executive director of the National Foundation International urged caution when doing LGBTT advocacy in other countries, since labelling someone gay in a society that denies that homosexuality exists can have fatal consequences.

Growing up understanding that she was different, Aisha saw no examples and was provided no templates to help guide her. Gay was either what was portrayed in Hollywood movies—white, sex-addicted, funny—or what she could gather from the limited examples she saw in Filipino culture—swishy men wearing lady's dresses. It was from that experience that she began to understand it was going to be hard to define who she was in a society obsessed with simple labels. Compounding it all was her admirable refusal to relinquish parts of herself, like her cultural background, just to make life easier.

It is this inability to turn their backs on family and culture that provides the greatest strife for gay visible minorities. It is also the strong connection to family that in some cases makes being gay OK. Aisha's friend and DIAM co-founder had for the longest time not told his parents that he was gay, but their only concern when he finally did was that he still maintain his duties as a son and take care of his family. For him this was a good scenario—he was able to take care of himself and his family.

FOR A GROUP OF GUYS from Team Edmonton, being gay and coming from a non-white background provided them with an opportunity to think differently and examine everything that had been passed down to them. "It gave me a reason to be different," says Kwok, who is Chinese, "because I already knew I was different."

It's a sentiment echoed by Norman and Jackie, who are also Chinese and gay, which led to a discussion on how being gay relates to the transnational issue of being CBC (Canadian-born Chinese) and the experience of lost identity—not being seen as Canadian by Canadians, and not seen as Chinese by people in China. In a way, being gay gave them an escape route and allowed them to consider what it was to be outside of labels altogether.

All three, along with Carlos, who comes from El Salvador, say that the majority of issues came not from being gay in their families, but from being a visible minority in Edmonton's gay culture. While they all agree that things are getting better, each has their own stories of ignorance, fetishization and discrimination that came from within Edmonton's gay community. Norman pointed to generalizations like someone who is Asian and gay automatically being seen as passive, as a bottom or only into white guys. He remembers once being told at a bar in the city to "stick to your own kind." Jackie recalls how being Chinese seems to rule out in other people's minds the possibility that he might also be gay. "They see me as Chinese first and can't even conceive that there is more to me than that,"

Carlos has a slightly different experience, and uses being visibly different as his competitive edge at the bars. As someone who grew up not really relating to his Salvadoran roots, Carlos now plays it up to his advantage at the gay bars. "When Latin song comes on I am front and center on the dance floor. I know that this is my time." He doesn't mind that some guys would be into him just because he is Latin. For others, being seen first as Latin, Chinese or Black can be an issue. Aisha has a friend in the DIAM group, a black gay man who is tired of being seen as a conquest by white guys who want to fulfill the fantasy of being with a black man.

Another member of DIAM is a Muslim lesbian who wears a hijab. For her to go out and be a part of Edmonton's gay scene is almost impossible. Even if she can get up the nerve to go to a gay bar, there is the reality that once she gets in, she is seen first and foremost as a Muslim, rather than a woman looking to dance and have a good time. Nothing kills the mood more than being seen as a terrorist when you're just trying to dance to a Madonna song.

These stories, which blend ethnic and sexual identities together, are not readily available in mainstream media in school curriculum or heard over holiday dinner. That, says Aisha, is why DIAM exists.

"We couldn't find ourselves in the queer community and no one talks about these things in our homes, so we come together and illuminate for each other what it is to be gay and ourselves." ♡

For more information on DIAM visit diamonline.org.

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John at jcollier@shaw.ca

Red Cross's Humanitarian Issues Program need volunteers to help promote humanitarian issues to the Edmonton Community. We are hoping to expand our youth team (12-24 yrs old). Contact Laura Keegan at laura.keegan@redcross.ca

The CRC is seeking energetic, caring, committed volunteers to become Prevention Educators for its RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention Program. Canadian Red Cross/RespectED Training Program begins fall 2008. www.redcross.ca/cnar, Education Coordinator: 780.702.4158 / E: edmonton.respected@redcross.ca

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A Hospital is seeking healthy and depressed subjects (not currently taking antidepressants) for various studies. Reimbursement for expenses provided. Call 407-3221 (depressed only), 407-3906 (healthy or depressed), or 407-3775 (female healthy or depressed, including pregnant and just delivered) for more information

Tandem Captains—Cycling with the Blind
Tandem Captains required. Please contact John Collier at 433-1270

Dr.'s Appointment Buddy—Accompany new refugee immigrants to their medical appointments to give support and assist with paperwork. Thu, 10:30am-2:30pm. Transportation not required. Leslie 780-432-1137, ext 357

Instructor Support Aide—Assist Health Care Aide Training instructors in a program for immigrant women to present course materials, and students. 4hrs/wk, 8am-noon, or 1-4pm, Mon-Fri. Northeast location. Leslie 780-432-1137, ext 357

Elder Abuse Victim Advocate—Assist, provide telephone support. Mature volunteers, 35+, with calm manner and excellent communication skills wanted. Volunteers receive intensive training and support. Commitment: Two 2 hr shifts/month, plus attendance at monthly staff meeting. Daytime Mon, Tue, or Thu 8am-5pm. Leslie 780-432-1137, ext 357

Volunteer for your local Red Cross. Help us make our mission of assisting the most vulnerable in our community and around the world possible. Volunteer for Red Cross. To volunteer call 780.423.2680 / E: wz-edm-dm@redcross.ca

Rise Up: Radio Free Edmonton on CJSR FM 88 seeking people with a critical ear who will be at protests, picket-lines, blockades, any sites of struggle between people, corporations or governments to simply bring a recorder and send us the footage. E: riseupradio@cjsr.com; Sam Power, 492-2577 ext. 4 for recording equipment and more details

Break the Code! Help and adult to read and write. Call Jordan Centre for Family Literacy 421-7323
www.familit.ca

Senior's Birthday Entertainment
Senior recreation/activity centre needs volunteer entertainers for monthly afternoon parties. Weekday message Karen 780-468-1985 seesa.ca

Volunteers Needed to work with new immigrants in a variety of tasks and with some great fun events and outings! Many exciting shifts available! Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed! to assist new immigrants on first time shopping trip for essentials. 2-3 hrs. occas. weekdays. Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed! to help adult immigrants learn English. Shifts day/eve., days/wknds, 3-4hrs/wk. No exp. req., various locations. Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed to help new immigrants to Canada learn about Canadian customs and culture. Tue and Thu June-Aug. Ph Judy 424-3545, ext 249

The Support Network: Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: www.thesupportnetwork.com or call 780-732-6648

Meals on Wheels, volunteer kitchen help and drivers needed, weekdays 10am-1pm. Call 429-2020.

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ANDREA NEMERSON
alisen@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR ANDREA:

A male friend recently told me that he finds it very frustrating when women try to please him in ways other than intercourse. According to him, during hand jobs and blow jobs men are just thinking, "Get on with it!" He claims to have spoken to lots of other guys about this who agreed with him.

Is this really true? Are there men who feel like this or is he winding me up? (I suspect that the sample of people he asked wasn't representative—but it's been on my mind anyway.) Maybe the skills of his sexual partners haven't been up to scratch? Or maybe it's just his problem?

LOVE: WHOSE PROBLEM?

DEAR PROB:

His problem. My then-boyfriend (we got married and now I don't get to have a boyfriend anymore) used to use a phrase, "That's not an MP, that's a YP," which comes to mind, but he never used it on me and that's a good thing, because it's really obnoxious. If this guy were your boyfriend this would be a YP too, so let's be glad he's just a friend and it's an HP all the way.

No, I don't think it's particularly true, although the category "men" is rather large and there are individuals and subgroups who do feel that way. Very young men, for instance, will usually have been waiting for years to "get on with it," and tend to think of intercourse as "the real thing" or "sex" and feel like everything else is, I guess, the fake thing. The sad part is that this conviction often leads to fairly disappointing sex, especially but not exclusively for the girls involved, when teenagers trade in the usual

ly gratifying heavy petting and manual and oral for the strictly genital.

Men who know a bit more about what they really like do tend to have a slightly wider repertoire, depending on and responsive to who, what, when, where and why. Sometimes a man just needs a blow job. Sometimes everything is just too wet and soft to get the job done (although men are, admittedly, generally partial to the wet and soft) and only a hand will do the job. Sometimes the visual element (from above while partner kneels, from behind in doggy-style) is the important part, with friction and tempo taking the back seat, as it were. In other words, as in all things sexual, it depends. Your friend, by assuming that all men are just like him, is lacking in imagination, and again I say good for you for not having to be his girlfriend.

LOVE, ANDREA

DEAR ANDREA:

I've been going out with a great man for a year now and the sex is finally beginning to flourish in kinky and sensual ways. I can orgasm relatively quickly from a variety of methods. The problem is, recently he can't come from oral or vaginal intercourse. We try different positions but the only way he can reach orgasm is from his own hand. What is going on here? How can I get him to come with me?

LOVE, WOMAN WAITING

DEAR WW:

I suggest you file this under "fond hopes" and not make too big a deal out of it, since sexual response is not the sort of system that responds well to stress. I'd also caution you not to take it personally, if that's possible, since assuming you are not doing anything differently, this appears to be an HP and nothing you can affect much one way or the other. I do wonder if perhaps he has started taking an antidepressant or a beta blocker, both common medications with nearly universal sexual side effects, at least at first. If so, you give it a while and if things

don't improve he goes back to the doctor for a meds adjustment and a general check-up.

If not that or that or that other thing, the usual culprits are aging (possible, you didn't say), anxiety and, of course, boredom. Lots of people would rather hear that their partner has a dangerous, progressive disease than that he's bored with them, but don't freak out. If you're just getting into the fun, kinky part together it's unlikely that he's bored already. He may be worried about something or fixating on something even kinkier that he's afraid to ask for but that you might feel like offering if only you knew what it was. And he might simply be aging out of the sorts of stimulation that did it for him before and need rougher handling, which you can certainly provide. Watch what he's doing with the successful handiwork—where is he stroking, how hard and how fast? Once you know what's working you can try recreating the sensations in a way that gets and keeps you involved. Nobody said you can't use your hand (or his) during a blow job, right? Or during what the guy in the first letter would insist all men like better anyway?

LOVE, ANDREA

Volunteer for ElderCare. Help with daily activities for seniors. Call 780-434-4747 Ext. 4

Canadian Mental Health Association—Edmonton Region Board Recruitment. For info visit www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca, click on Volunteer. Contact Abigail Parrish-Craig at grammaabby@shaw.ca

E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM) Volunteers welcome. www.wage-peace.com for info/contacts, 780-988-2713

Become a distress line volunteer. The Support Network, 732-6648. www.thesupportnetwork.com

A call for volunteers - Action for Healthy Communities: Questions about AHC philosophy & programs? 944-4687 Visit: www.a4hc.ca

CANADIAN LIVER FOUNDATION is looking for enthusiastic volunteers for presentations and social events. Call Carmen at 444-1547

Join in the hottest new trend of personal history. Unique volunteer opportunity to develop your artistic and writing skills by helping to put together a collection of life history stories of Edmonton elders. Interviews have been conducted, we now need someone to assist with transcription, storywriting, and/or layout and design. 434-4747 ext. 4 for info

Volunteer for the AGA and meet other art enthusiasts, get a free membership after 30 hrs of volunteer work, get invitations to events and movies. For info contact Priscilla Wagar at 422-6223 or priscilla@artgalleryalberta.com

Would you like to help people/families affected by Alzheimer's? Socialize with seniors while assisting with games and activities. ElderCare Edmonton, 780-434-4747 ext. 4

Help to broadcast news nationally for the blind and print-restricted! Email edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com, or call 780-451-8331.

Love Bingo? Volunteer for Elder Care. Bingo volunteers are needed to help raise funds for program meals and outings. Ph 434-4747, ext. 4

Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit www.exposurefestival.ca

Volunteer for a more just society for immigrants and refugees. www.multiculturalcoalition.ca or call Janina 423-1973

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the Math Literacy Program. For info Ph 424-5514

HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS required for studies with the Brain Neurobiology. Research at UofA (407-3906). Reimbursement provided

Volunteer Overseas with Canadian Crossroads International: human rights, community economic development, and HIV/AIDS education, prevention, care. www.cciorg.ca

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The Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A is seeking MAJOR DEPRESSION sufferers who are interested in participating in a research study. Please call 407-3906 if interested

YEAR ROUND ON-LINE AUCTION for Alberta Easter Seals. Donate items, bid, have a great time. Carmen 429-0137 x233. <http://auction.edmonton24hourrelay.com>

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the ESL - English as a Second Language program. Training and materials provided. Contact 424-5514

Do you know what a Volunteer Driver is? It's a community member who can spare 3-4 hours once a month to drive a senior. Call Bev 732-1221

Do you love art and people? Then the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts can use you! Come show off your talents. www.ninahaggertyart.ca; email: info@nina-haggertyart.ca or call 474-7611

Food Not Bombs Looking for people to help out with cooking and serving of meals every Sunday. Ph 904-8751 or e-mail: foodnotbombedmonton@hotmail.com

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton needs volunteers to take calls on our 24-hour Crisis line. For information ph 423-4102

CNIB is looking for volunteers with vision, adults (50+) to help seniors with vision loss. For more info call Catherine 453-8304

Volunteer for Canadian Mental Health contact CMHSA-ER at 414-6300 or check www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca

Volunteer teachers needed to teach English as a second language to newcomers to Canada. Orientation and training provided. Meet people from all around the world. Jason: jmarkowsky@cci-lex.ca or 944-0792

SERVICES

SACE—Public Education Program: Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (www.sace.ab.ca) provides crisis intervention, information, counseling, public education services. For a customized presentation T: 423-4102/F: 421-8734/E: info@sace.ab.ca; www.sace.ab.ca/24HourCrisis Line: 423-4121

Canadian Mental Health Association, www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program is pleased to offer workshops to give you the skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. Follow the links to ASIST or call 414-6300

Have you been affected by another person's sexual behaviour? S-Anon is a 12-Step fellowship for family members and friends of sex addicts. Ph 780-988-4411 for meeting locations and info, or visit www.sanon.org

Overwhelmed? Is a tough spot? Talk to us! No-Fee Walk-In counselling 482-INFO (4636) The Support Network, www.thesupportnetwork.com

YEAR ROUND ON-LINE AUCTION for Alberta Easter Seals. <http://auction.edmonton24hourrelay.com> DONATE ITEMS, BID, HAVE A GREAT TIME. Carmen 429-0136, ext. 233

Do You Know Someone Who Has Diabetes? Help find a cure. Volunteers are required for various fundraising events for the Alberta Diabetes

IS DRINKING A PROBLEM?
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VUEWEEKLY CONTEST RULES:

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- the winner must be 18 or older.

- prize must be accepted as awarded.

- no one may enter any contest more than once.

- you may only win once every 60 days.

- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.

- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter.

- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.

- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.

- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.

- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.

- by entering with an email address one authorizes oneself to be added to FIRSTSTREET!

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